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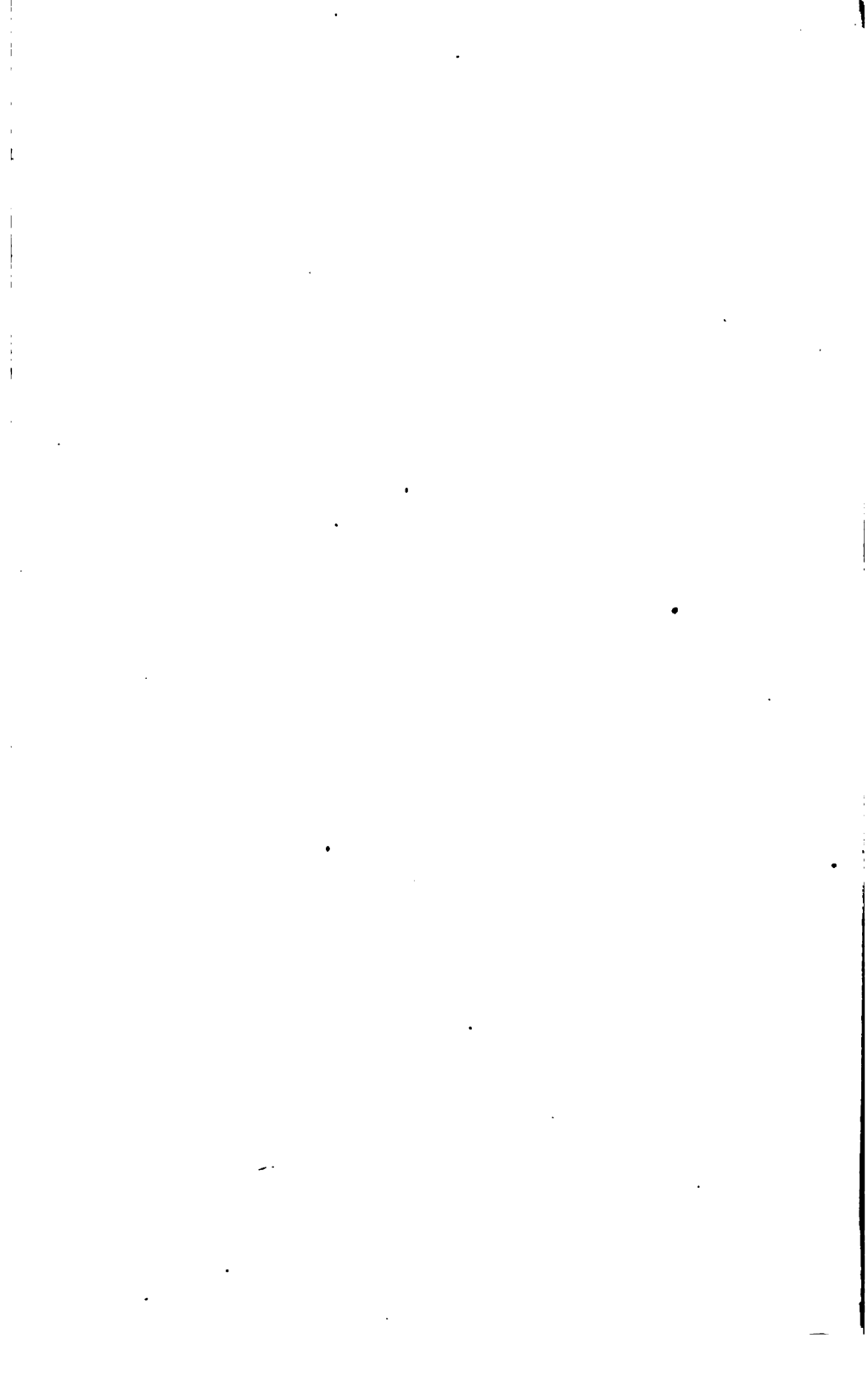
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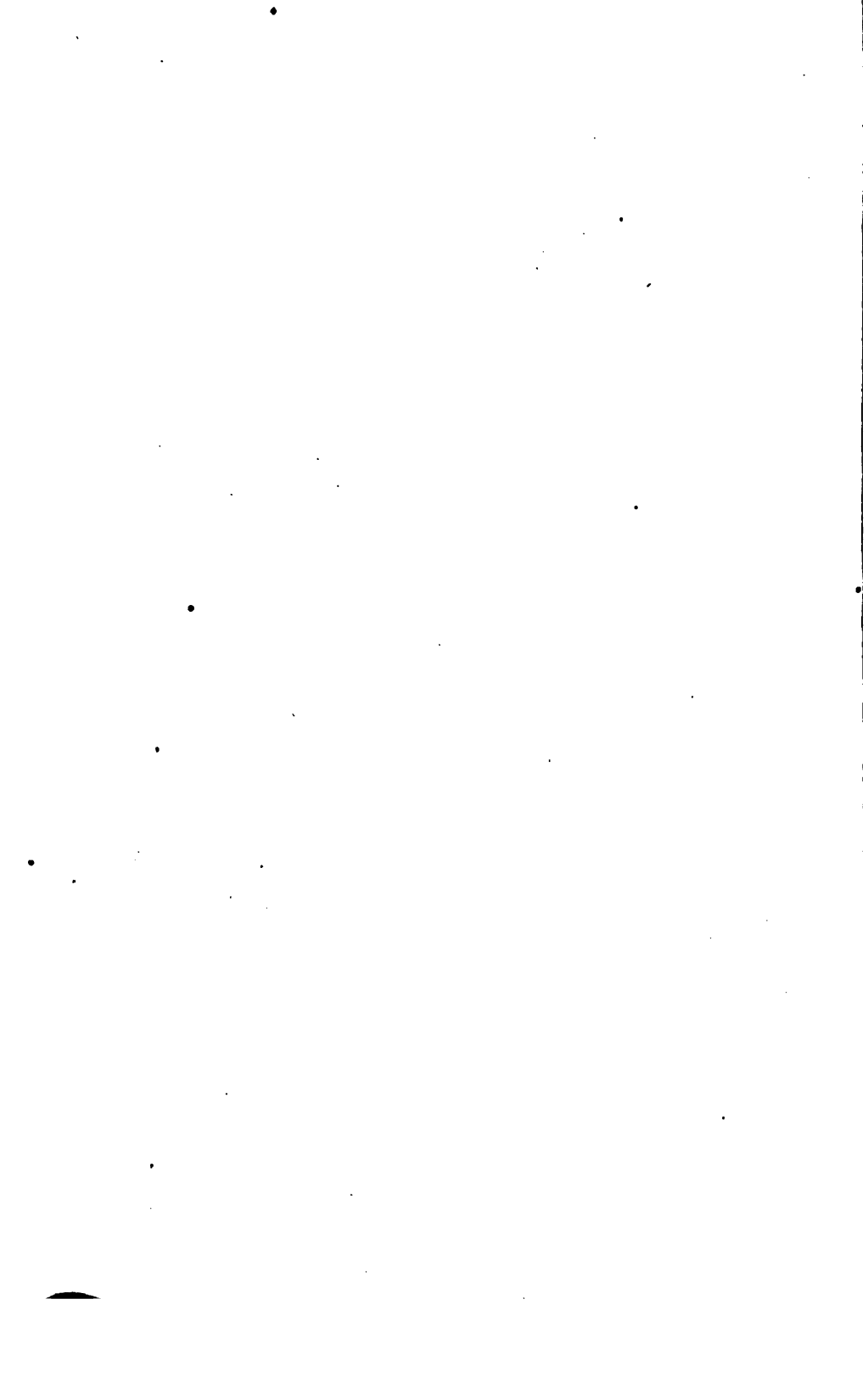
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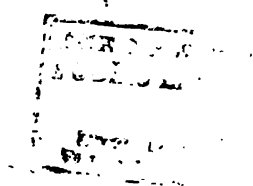






RALPH BERNAL OSBORNE

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AND PARLIAMENT STREET





RALPH BERNAL OSBORNE.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY W. WOODWARD & Co. OF NOTTINGHAM.

THE LIFE
OF
RALPH BERNAL OSBORNE, M.P.

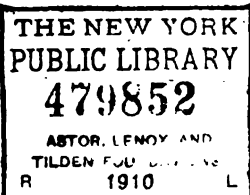
BY
PHILIP HENRY BAGENAL

WITH A PREFACE BY
HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF ST ALBANS

[FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION]

LONDON
RICHARD BENTLEY & SON, NEW BURLINGTON STREET
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen

1884
P.H.C.



PREFACE.

'I GIVE to my son-in-law, William A. A. de Vere, Duke of St. Albans, my despatch boxes and dressing case, together with all my private letters and papers.'

By such bequest Ralph Osborne confided to me the care of his memory.

It was at first his daughter's and my wish that a memoir of Mr. Osborne should be published. With this idea the following work was begun, we reserving to ourselves the choice, when it was further advanced, of deciding whether it should be published, printed for private circulation, or kept as a memorial to be handed down to his descendants.

We have come to the conclusion, after consulting friends—friends who had been intimate with him in life, and who cherished his memory—that our object would not be obtained 'by making a book.'

The materials left were not copious, though much seemed of public interest. There was no autobio-

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graphy or diary to show a wish that his life should be recorded. His nature, we felt, was one which would have shrunk from the idea of his memory being connected with a biography. Severe critic himself, he would have disliked being the object of criticism, either of praise or blame.

But above these considerations we found the almost impossibility to do justice to our subject. Wit must flash. Reduced to black and white, it loses its sparkle; it becomes sodden, and the joke savours of Joe Miller.

However faithfully we endeavoured to portray the man, it was impossible to give the general public any fair and true idea of that strong-built frame, that expressive face, that falcon eye, and that powerful voice which knew so well how to modulate its tones, either to gain the attention of society or the senate. And so reluctantly we gave up the idea of publishing a memoir of Bernal Osborne. A man's life is after all only an atom in a generation, and a generation is but an item in history.

I cannot better than here express my thanks to Mr. Philip H. Bagenal, for the labour and care he has bestowed on the collection and compilation of materials. He never saw Mr. Osborne, and the lack of acquaintance necessarily increased the difficulty of his

task. His impressions had to be gained second-hand from those who had been his intimates. He had to ask the school-fellow of by-gone days to rub up his memory, and the political supporter to fight once again for him some keen electoral contest. Those who were Mr. Osborne's friends have been kindness itself in the willing and valuable assistance they have rendered. We have given all the help in our power by a careful supervision as the work proceeded; but the absence of any framework, and the nature of the materials at our disposal, have obliged us to abandon the idea of being able to produce a memoir possessing sufficient interest for the general reader. It seems to me, however, there is much in Mr. Bagenal's work which will interest Mr. Osborne's personal friends, and also much which is likely to be useful to the student of the Parliamentary history of the time.

It has been impossible to do justice to Mr. Osborne's never-failing wish to serve a friend, to his general kindness of heart; while that 'vivacity of mind,' to which he himself attributed much of his want of success as a politician, but which no doubt gave a peculiar charm to his society, may seem to acquire undue prominence in the narration of events. If, however, Mr. Bagenal and I have failed in our first

intention, we undertook a task before which an older, a more practised, and a cleverer hand than ours had recoiled.

These reasons have induced me to relinquish the idea of throwing the memoir into the literary arena, but I have decided to print some copies for private circulation, thinking there are many who will like to possess this volume, since it will recall to their recollection their friend Bernal Osborne.

ST. ALBANS.

BESTWOOD : *February 1, 1884.*

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LIFE
OF
RALPH BERNAL OSBORNE, M.P.

CHAPTER I.

THE BERNALS.

THE Bernalns were of Spanish origin and Jewish descent. Their ancestors, according to various ancient books,¹ were settled during the Middle Ages in Seville and Andalusia, and took part in many of those

¹ There came to the siege of Algeziras, in the month of June, Don Gaston Conde de Foix, and his brother, Roger Bernal, Viscount of Castilbo, with a few Gascons. They found the King engaged in attacking the city, and in preparing himself to give battle to the Moors. He would indeed have gone in search of these, had he not been prevented by the difficulty he encountered in the passage of the river Guidarra. The King of Granada insisted on a truce being entered into, but the King Don Alonzo refused to enter into such truce, because the King of Granada would not, on his side, desist from the friendship he entertained towards the King Albohacen.—*Cronica de los Moros*, p. 531. Valenc. 1618.

In the year 1370, the King Mahomad continued his wars against the Christians, making many raids with hostile excursions into Andalusia, under the pretext of wishing to give assistance to the sons of the King Don Pedro, who were much favoured in the town of Carmona. However, he soon after made a truce with the King Don Enrique, and the negotiators of that truce were the masters of Santiago and Calatrava. Some slight rupture occurred in the peace subsisting between the King of Aragon and the King of Granada, because Pedro Bernal, captain of a squadron of galleys belonging to the King of Aragon, took for his master from the King of Granada a ship near Cerdeña, which that king was sending for a certain business he had in hand to the kingdom of Tunes. *Cronica de los Moros*, p. 541, Valencia, 1618.

important enterprises which mark the history of the Spanish Peninsula. Removing north, some members of

The Bernals or Bernads (which mean the same thing, for Bernal derives from Bernaldo and Bernad from Bernado, which the Aragonese call Bernard), come from Navarre. They originally came from France, as appears by the Chronicle of Navarre by Zamalloa in his compendium, which says that at the coronation of Charles, King of Navarre, third of his name, there were present Don Juan, Viscount of Fusensagued, Ramon Bernad, Señor Castelnuovo, and many other lords and gentry, of whom he gives a large catalogue. From these Bernals or Bernads, at the time of the conquest of this kingdom, descended Guillen Bernal, who was possessed of property in this city, Murcia, among the settled gentry of it, as states the book of the town at page 27. Of this name there is much in the books of the annals of our archives.

Francisco Bernal is the first that I find to have been governor in 1374 and 1397, and Pero Bernal was governor this last year jointly with the said Francisco Bernal, who was as well judge of appeal and a follower of the King. Pero Bernal was judge in the Office of Improvement in the year 1418. Don Juan Bernal was Bishop of Calahorra, and one of the most excellent and notable prelates of his time, viz., that of the King Don Enrique IV. Martin Bernal was constable of the Castle of Lebrilla, as certifies the book of papers and provisions of Don Enrique IV. of our archive in the year 1454. The King Don Ferdinand the Catholic having gained the kingdom of Naples, the great captain divided among many captains and titled men all the castles and important fortresses of the kingdom, amongst whom (as says Zorita in his Annals, lib. v. cap. 73, year 1504) he recommended to Captain Pedro Bernal, native of Murcia, the defence of Roca Imperial. And being within Roca Imperial, Pedro Bernal was besieged by the French, and defended it in such a manner that the enemy retired with great loss; and until the end of the battle of the Garellano, he performed such heroic feats at the cost of his blood and to the admiration of everyone, that Monsieur de Abeni, general of the King of France, being our prisoner, said in the presence of many, that if his lord, the King of France, could find such gentlemen as Captain Pedro Bernal, the kingdom of Naples would not be won for a hundred years. In the time of the 'Comunidades,' Francisco Bernal and the other rulers of this city departed to La Alcantarilla, being compelled by the partisans of the 'Comunidades,' and there made solemn oath to be for the King, to live and to die in his service, and not to join the 'Comunidades' till that party found themselves reduced to obedience to the King. The same Francisco Bernal and Don Alonzo Faxardo, governors of this city, obtained permission from the Emperor in the year 1525 to transport the entrails of the King Don Alonzo the Wise from Santa Maria de Gracia of Murcia to the great chapel of the cathedral church. Francisco Bernal married Doña Elvira Ruiz de Quiros, daughter of Alonzo Ruiz de Quiros, and had as children Pedro and

the Bernal family migrated to Amsterdam, and it is on record that in the present century an old mansion stood in that city, bearing the name of 'Bernalenburg,' and with the Bernal escutcheon engraved upon the walls. This was the residence of Gaspar Francis Bernal, who died in November 1680.

In the last century another branch of the family came over to London as West India merchants. Although at first attached to the congregation of Spanish and Portuguese Jews, it was not long before the Bernals adopted the Christian faith and became absorbed in the English nation, and, like many other families sprung from that remarkable and ancient race, were destined to take a leading part in the public life of their adopted country.

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Alonzo and Doña Alonzo Bernal. Alonzo Bernal was Inquisitor of Sicily when first the Inquisition established itself in that island, whither he took a good guard on account of the resistance he met there. Doña Alonzo Bernal married Rodrigo Perez Beltran. Pedro Bernal married Doña Beatriz Fernandez de la Peraleja. They had as children Francisco and Doña Elvira and Doña Constanza. Doña Elvira married Don Rodrigo Faxardo, general of the coast of Amurcia, and constable of the castle there. Doña Constanza married Don Riquelona. Francisco married Doña Juana de Avellan. These had as children Pedro and Alonzo and Doña Beatriz. Dona Beatriz married Alonzo Faxardo. Pedro married Doña Ana Davalos, and they had two children, one of whom, Don Alonzo, married Doña Catalina Martinez Galtero, of which marriage were Don Alonzo, page of his Majesty Don Pedro, and canon of the Holy Church of Cartagena. Alonzo Bernal married Doña Maria de Sandoval, and had as sons Don Alonzo Bernal, who married Doña Clara Bernal, and Don Juan, who married Doña Elvira de Aniela. The Bernal arms are, in a field of gold a greyhound argent and sable, above a roque or cup gules, and on the borders fifteen banners.—Extract from *Discursos Historicos de Murcia y su Reyno*, by Francisco Càscales, pp. 380-1, Murcia, 1775.

important enterprises which mark the history of the Spanish Peninsula. Removing north, some members of

The Bernalns or Bernads (which mean the same thing, for Bernal derives from Bernaldo and Bernad from Bernado, which the Aragonese call Bernard), come from Navarre. They originally came from France, as appears by the Chronicle of Navarre by Zamalloa in his compendium, which says that at the coronation of Charles, King of Navarre, third of his name, there were present Don Juan, Viscount of Fusensagued, Ramon Bernad, Señor Castelnuevo, and many other lords and gentry, of whom he gives a large catalogue. From these Bernalns or Bernads, at the time of the conquest of this kingdom, descended Guillen Bernal, who was possessed of property in this city, Murcia, among the settled gentry of it, as states the book of the town at page 27. Of this name there is much in the books of the annals of our archives.

Francisco Bernal is the first that I find to have been governor in 1374 and 1397, and Pero Bernal was governor this last year jointly with the said Francisco Bernal, who was as well judge of appeal and a follower of the King. Pero Bernal was judge in the Office of Improvement in the year 1418. Don Juan Bernal was Bishop of Calahorra, and one of the most excellent and notable prelates of his time, viz., that of the King Don Enrique IV. Martin Bernal was constable of the Castle of Lebrilla, as certifies the book of papers and provisions of Don Enrique IV. of our archive in the year 1454. The King Don Ferdinand the Catholic having gained the kingdom of Naples, the great captain divided among many captains and titled men all the castles and important fortresses of the kingdom, amongst whom (as says Zorita in his Annals, lib. v. cap. 73, year 1504) he recommended to Captain Pedro Bernal, native of Murcia, the defence of Roca Imperial. And being within Roca Imperial, Pedro Bernal was besieged by the French, and defended it in such a manner that the enemy retired with great loss; and until the end of the battle of the Garellano, he performed such heroic feats at the cost of his blood and to the admiration of everyone, that Monsieur de Abeni, general of the King of France, being our prisoner, said in the presence of many, that if his lord, the King of France, could find such gentlemen as Captain Pedro Bernal, the kingdom of Naples would not be won for a hundred years. In the time of the 'Comunidades,' Francisco Bernal and the other rulers of this city departed to La Alcantarilla, being compelled by the partisans of the 'Comunidades,' and there made solemn oath to be for the King, to live and to die in his service, and not to join the 'Comunidades' till that party found themselves reduced to obedience to the King. The same Francisco Bernal and Don Alonzo Faxardo, governors of this city, obtained permission from the Emperor in the year 1525 to transport the entrails of the King Don Alonzo the Wise from Santa Maria de Gracia of Murcia to the great chapel of the cathedral church. Francisco Bernal married Doña Elvira Ruiz de Quiros, daughter of Alonzo Ruiz de Quiros, and had as children Pedro and

the Bernal family migrated to Amsterdam, and it is on record that in the present century an old mansion stood in that city, bearing the name of 'Bernalenburg,' and with the Bernal escutcheon engraved upon the walls. This was the residence of Gaspar Francis Bernal, who died in November 1680.

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for a safer seat, and for a great number of years sat for Rochester. He afterwards represented Weymouth. Mr. Bernal was a well-known member of the Liberal party and of Brooks's Club. His judgment and political foresight were soon recognized in the House of Commons. He became Chairman of Committees, and one of the most familiar figures in the political life of his day. Mr. Bernal and his son, Ralph Bernal the younger, sat together in Parliament respectively for Rochester and Wycombe between 1842 and 1852. Old members still remember how the Chairman of Committees used laughingly to tell his friends that not the least difficult part of his duties was to keep the young member for Wycombe in order. Mr. Bernal sat in the House of Commons altogether nearly thirty-four years, at a cost of no less than 66,000*l.* in election expenses. It was at Lincoln that he realized the cost of Parliamentary honours. He had already spent a large sum of money there, when he was finally asked to pay a further considerable sum. Indignant at the request, he replied, 'Yes! and if you will wait a moment you shall have my coat too.' Smarting under the knowledge of his father's enormous electoral expenditure, Bernal Osborne invariably set his face resolutely against any but the absolute legitimate expenses of an election contest, and this he did successfully throughout a long and chequered parliamentary career.

When Mr. Bernal died on August 25, 1854, two years after his exclusion from public life consequent upon his defeat at Rochester, his social character and political reputation received the highest public encomiums.¹ It is not, however, so much as a politician, as from

¹ 'There are few old members,' said the *Daily News*, when Mr. Bernal was defeated in 1852 for Rochester, 'on either side of the new

his judgment and taste in the collection of specimens of mediæval art that Mr. Bernal will be best remembered, and his son used to say that it might almost be said that the South Kensington Museum had its cradle in his house in Eaton Square. Ralph Bernal the younger used to delight in telling a typical story illustrating his father's rare critical qualities in matters of art. One morning, while they sat at breakfast, a well-known Bond Street dealer was announced, who said that he had brought a curious crystal which he had bought on the Continent, and for which he wanted 10*l*. Mr. Bernal drew from his pocket a magnifying glass, which he usually carried about him, and carefully examined the curiosity. He then said, 'I'll take it,' and gave the money. When the dealer had left, Mr. Bernal, turning to his son, said, 'I gave what he asked because I saw what was engraved in the corner.'¹ The purchase justified Mr. Bernal's opinion, and proved to be a unique gem made by order of Lothair, King of France, between 954 and 986 A.D., and which had

House who will not miss the late Chairman of Ways and Means ; so intelligent, so courteous, so accessible, so ready with information on matters of detail, so constant in his attendance, and so business-like whilst presiding over Committees of the whole House. Yet there was nothing servile, nothing merely plausible, nothing showy about Mr. Bernal's suavity ; in his hands the House was in the hands of a thorough gentleman, careful of its character, its honour, and its dignity, who knew everything relating to its proceedings, and who unostentatiously had done much to improve those proceedings and to adapt its manner of transacting private business to the vast and various increase that would otherwise have overrun Parliament. Mr. Bernal was a fine specimen of thorough liberality of political opinions and complete independence of mere *cliquerie*, accompanied by cultivated understanding, good taste, and courteous manner. He had become, too, part and parcel of the House, and on its reassembling the question will instinctively rise to many tongues, when advice is wanted or information is sought, "Where is Bernal?" Rochester may well blush for his exclusion ; the loss is public, but the disgrace is local.'—*Daily News*, July 21, 1852.

¹ '*Lotharius Rex Franc. fieri jussit.*'

formerly belonged to the Abbey of the Meuse. 'Thus,' Bernal Osborne used to say, 'through my father's knowledge and judgment was rescued an historical relic, the possession of which at his death was competed for by England and France, and is now in the treasure room of the British Museum.' An attempt was made to secure the Bernal collection for the nation, but to no purpose, and it was dispersed at his death, and eventually formed the nucleus of most of the important collections of the present day.¹

Mr. Bernal was not conspicuous in the literature of his day, though he contributed some graceful verses

¹ The following letter from Mr. Richard Ford to Mr. Bernal Osborne is sufficient evidence of this :—

'123 Park Street, February 24, 1855.

'DEAR OSBORNE,—When I asked you last night at Lord Palmerston's whether you would take 50,000*l.*, it was because Layard had asked me to get a sort of petition signed for the purchase, and said he would present it and speak on it in Parliament.

'I did nothing, because, on the whole, that course did not seem to me to be the best. The purchase has been merely mooted, and the Society of Arts will next week have many petitions from county towns in favour of the acquisition. I had written, long before Layard spoke to me, an urgent letter to Moffatt which has been some time in Wilson's hands. I breakfasted with him (Wilson) this morning, and took him over No. 93, and he is quite impressed with the importance of the matter, and tells me that he knows Gladstone is also. I walked with him to Palmerston's, so the affair is *en train*. It would indeed be a grand thing for the country to have such a nucleus of a museum, and it would embalm the name of your father, my old and much-loved friend, in the manner he would most like.

'This thaw, I admit, is worth thousands in cheering the bidders; how unlucky these dire and costly wars! and how unfortunate all this dislocation of Chancellors of the Exchequer! Even in your excellent department while millions are spent on transport, thousands are wanting in the so-called richest nation to secure examples of a better taste and higher art. Let us give up pretensions of being a wealthy or artistic nation, and stick to our steam-engines and railways.

'The Treasury will dole out the British Museum some help.

'Yours truly,

'RICHARD FORD.'

and tales to the magazines of the period.¹ From his earliest years, his son Ralph Bernal's tastes were cultivated by the finest examples of mediæval art, whilst his political ambition was aroused by the teaching of his father, who led him to regard the House of Commons as the finest arena for the exercise of an Englishman's ambition.

¹ See *Keepsake*, 1829-1850, and *Book of Beauty*, 1835-1847.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY YEARS AND TASTES.

MR. BERNAL married first Miss White, daughter of Dr. Henry White, R.N., and of this marriage the first issue was Ralph Bernal the younger, afterwards to be known as Bernal Osborne. He inherited from his father several characteristic traits of mind, and resembled him somewhat in person. He had a fine ear for music, and, above all, a voice the compass and tone of which were very remarkable.

Ralph Bernal entered the Charterhouse in 1818 when Dr. Russell was head master. There are old Carthusians who still have a keen recollection of the rather tall, olive-cheeked, bright-eyed, handsome boy, even then shining among his schoolfellows as unrivalled in repartee and unapproached in ready wit. Bernal was in Watkinson's house—'Old Watky,' as he was irreverently called by the boys—and amongst his comrades were Mr. Murray, the well-known publisher, the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Liddell, the Rev. Canon Eaton, and Mr. Freshfield, formerly M.P. for Dover.

Even at that early period Ralph Bernal evinced a remarkable taste for the drama, a taste which he cultivated and enjoyed down to the latest years of his life. He was for ever reading and quoting Shakespeare, his knowledge of which for a boy was remarkable. With a peculiarly tenacious memory he was

never happier than when declaiming in a theatrical way some favourite passage to an admiring audience, an occupation far more congenial to him than the ordinary routine of school life.

At Charterhouse in more ways than one Bernal proved the truth of the poet's words, 'The child is father of the man.' One of his characteristics was a sturdy independence of opinion and a straightforward honesty of expression which made him at once a leader, although he was not gifted with that proficiency in games which is most admired in boys. His pre-eminence was owing principally to his intellectual qualities and his natural force of character. He was amusing and original, and these two attributes secured him admirers.

One or two occurrences illustrate this. Dr. Russell used occasionally to give his whole school a severe harangue or set lecture whenever any high crime or misdemeanour or other serious occurrence appeared to him to require it. These addresses were naturally uncongenial to the schoolboy frame of mind, and they were accordingly nicknamed 'pills.' 'Russell's going to give a pill' was the murmur passed around the school when conscious guilt foresaw the coming storm. One day Bernal's form had a piece of Latin prose to do in which by some chance the expression 'blue pills' had to be translated. Everyone was puzzled, except Bernal, who was determined to kill two birds with one stone—make a joke and translate the phrase. He at once rendered it into '*cærulei sermones*,' to the inextinguishable merriment of the form and the undying recollection of Bernal's friend, Thomas Eaton.¹

¹ Now Canon Eaton of West Kirby Rectory, Birkenhead.

The jest was but a boyish one, no doubt, but the audacity of the allusion was characteristic.

We also hear of young Bernal and his friend Eaton employing their boyish leisure in dramatizing 'Gil Blas' into a farce, which they had the temerity to submit to Mr. Elliston, the well-known actor, and Mr. Gifford, the editor of the 'Quarterly Review.' The encouragement, however, which their farce received from these critics was such as to cause them to consign their early efforts to the waste-paper basket.

In 1823, at the age of fifteen, while still at the Charterhouse, Ralph Bernal lost his mother, to whom he was devotedly attached. Her end was tragic. She was burnt to death; and the unhappy fate of Mrs. Bernal seems to have had a deep effect upon her son, who expressed his feelings in a poem of twelve stanzas, the tone of which may be judged by the following quotation :—

'Tis sad to list the passing bell
Which speaks some stranger's vanished breath ;
But ah ! how sad that harrowing knell,
The signal of a mother's death !

Mother, if, shrined in realms above,
The soul can look on earthly ties,
And if the force of mortal love
Dwells with the spirit in the skies,

Look on thy son. If angels plead
For mortals' sins, oh ! plead for me ;
Blot with thy tears each guilty deed,
That I may rise to heaven and thee.

The poetic instinct had been strong in young Bernal from early childhood. Sometimes during the years, when sent to Brooks's Club with a message to

his father, and while waiting to see him, he used to amuse himself by scribbling lines and hiding them in blotters, where they were afterwards found and their authorship detected. Two manuscript books of poems are extant, which contain his earliest efforts together with those of his more mature years. In one of these there are the evidences of Bernal's first romance, in the shape of a farewell set of verses to some fair object of a boyish love. There is no heading, but internal evidence lends point to the following inscription—' N.B., May 1825, July 1827 '—these dates fixing the 'two long years' in the second verse quoted. A few extracts will suffice.

We part ; and it is vain to sigh,
 Since sighs, alas ! may not restore thee ;
 But if I joyed when thou wast by,
 When absent how must I deplore thee !

Yes, I have loved. Could I refrain ?
 I saw, and you became my idol ;
 For two long years I felt the pain
 Which Time's stern hand could never bridle.

Bernal's muse was very fertile just at this period, and he seems to have attempted several styles, from imitations of Pope's satirical couplet to lyrical effusions in the manner of Suckling. Thus we find him attacking 'The Age we live in' in a satire of two hundred and fifty lines, leading off thus :—

Stung by the follies of the present time,
 My angry satire seeks relief in rhyme.

Come, specious Humbug, goddess of the day,
 Be thou propitious and befriend my lay ;
 So may I trust my pent-up spleen in rhyme,
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This piece is interesting, as it shows thus early the propensity for stinging independent criticism for which in after years Bernal Osborne was famous. There are many passages of considerable merit, and throughout there is a power of sarcastic phrase and apt characterization which is remarkable, considering the satirist was only eighteen when he wrote his lines. His allusions to the habits of the fashionable world, for which young Bernal exhibited the most profound contempt, are pointed and happy. He condemns the press, the opera, gambling, religious hypocrisy, the immorality and imbecility of the upper classes, and, in fact, plays Juvenal to his heart's content. It is evident from the following passage that Ralph Bernal was determined to make his mark in the world, even in these days when he was reading extensively and writing verse under the care of a private tutor. The lines are neat and well turned:—

What if the progress of the man we trace ?
View him an infant swaddled up in lace :
The anxious mother sees each dawning merit,
His sulks show genius, and his mischief spirit.
The boy is breeched ; released from nurse's rule,
His parts must ripen at a public school.
He goes—the father's pride, the mother's care,
Defies all discipline, and learns to swear.
Cambridge receives him when he comes of age,
And there he smokes, and learns to drive a stage.
Finished at last, he figures in the town
A vacant dandy, or a driving clown.

The picture, in parts, may have been drawn from his own experiences, and might pass for himself up to a certain point ; for Bernal did go to Cambridge, though he never smoked, and he was always most particular in his dress.

During this interval between school and college it is evident from the extracts in Bernal's commonplace books that he read widely and with critical taste. Edmund Burke was a favourite author, and throughout his Parliamentary career incessant quotations may be found from this great statesman, writer, and speaker. History was his favourite study, and, still harping on the drama, he used sometimes, when struck with an incident, to dash down notes for an historic piece. Thus : ' Subject for a tragedy, the conspiracy of Babington, character of Chidwick Tichborne ; *vide* the novel of the " Jesuit," also Hume and Camden. Ballard the Jesuit and Walsingham transcribed all the letters previous to their being sent to Henry.' Or again : ' Study on the character of Francis de Gondi, Cardinal de Retz, and the wars of the Fronde. To commence as Abbé under the regency and work out his subsequent intrigues. Characters to be brought forward in the drama : Anne of Austria, Mazarin, Duke of Orleans, and his confessor, Abbé de la Rivière, La Rochefoucauld, Beaufort, Condé.'

The episode in early English history of the career of Dunstan, Abbot of Glastonbury, evidently made a deep impression on Bernal, for he went so far as to write a complete syllabus of a play dealing with the subject. It never seems to have been elaborated. In the same manuscript book, but written in a more running hand, is a complete farce in two acts, the *dramatis personæ* of which are a newly elected M.P. and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Frankall, whose adventures form the subject of the piece.

It is, however, unnecessary to dwell on these efforts of boyhood. Sufficient has been said to show the growth of an intellectual activity which was hereafter

to command the attention of his contemporaries. At nineteen years old he had already shown signs of untrammelled genius, with an insubordination of mind and a hatred of humbug which, for good and for evil, guided his future career and influenced his whole life.

CHAPTER III.

CAMBRIDGE AND THE ARMY.

WHEN Ralph Bernal went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, in the October term of 1829, he was just of age. For two years he remained at the University. One of his college friends was Alexander Kinglake, afterwards to sit with him in Parliament and to become the historian of the 'Invasion of the Crimea.' From him we learn that Bernal at Cambridge was a brilliant, dashing freshman with a good figure, a keen handsome face, black hair, and a marvellous voice. His vigour and energy soon made him the dominating centre of a circle of young men. Gifted with great animal spirits and a natural gaiety of mind, together with intellectual powers beyond the undergraduate average, it is not surprising that Bernal became a leader at college. By nature fond of society and of personal intercourse with men, he was unrivalled as a boon companion, and at wine parties his voice was always ready with a song or a repartee. We find him also taking part in theatricals, and playing Captain Absolute in a representation of the 'Rivals' with great success.

At Cambridge, Bernal kept up his taste for writing verses, and satirized the college dons in lines that are still recollected. The following is a sketch of his own tutor, a celebrity of the day ; it is headed

'MEN'S EVIL MANNERS LIVE IN *BRASS*.'—*Henry VIII.*

Skilled in the sphere, triangle, and the square,
 In Greece well read, in company a bear,
 At home great B—'s wisdom rules the roast,
 Frames the bad pun or vaunts the idle boast,
 Abroad his rough demeanour frights the folks,
 Who vote his manners viler than his jokes.
 Prone to discussion, any cause he'll seek,
 And doffs his linen only once a week.
 If on some great and well-known man you chat,
 He'll quickly tell you 'I did this and that.'
 These are his errors, but mayhap you seek
 To learn his virtues: they consist in—Greek.
 The world, unmindful of the uncouth bore,
 Forgets his manners in his lettered lore.
 And yet in spite of Euclid and what not
 He seemed at best a learned Hottentot.

At Cambridge, Bernal developed that love for the hunting-field and horseflesh which he retained to the end of his life. The strength of these tastes is evinced by the numerous similes which he drew from sporting subjects in his political speeches.

It was natural that politics should have attracted the attention of Ralph Bernal the younger. His father was at this time a prominent member in the House of Commons, and at his house in Eaton Square were to be met the leading Liberal politicians of the day. Accordingly, about this period, we find the Cambridge undergraduate giving vent, in verse as usual, to some exceedingly revolutionary sentiments. The title, 'Radical Verses by a Bilious Man,' indicates that the writer fully appreciated the ludicrous side of political questions.

The lines were written in August 1830 during

vacation time, and are chiefly interesting as showing the bent of his early political views :—

Go search the page of history, and behold
 How much the privileged have blest their kind.
 Minus in mind, though prodigal in gold,
 To every feeling save ambition blind,
 They prate about their order, rights of old,
 In periods so sounding and refined,
 They half persuade themselves the name of peer
 Has magic in it for all fools to fear.

Say, has that day of blood so long passed by,
 That awful lesson to all 'things of state,'
 When wealth and fashion earned them not a sigh,
A la lanterne the fiat of their fate?
 Does not the echo of the nation's cry
 Ring in their ears and warn them of the hate
 Which men depressed must ever feel to those
 Who see their weakness and insult their woes?

It was now, however, necessary that young Bernal should apply his talents to some practical purpose. Mr. Bernal had married a second time, and Ralph Bernal the younger, although an elder son, had to enter a profession. His inclinations in this respect do not seem to have been consulted by his father, nor was he asked what profession he would prefer to adopt. One morning Bernal received from his father a letter announcing the fact that a commission had been provided for him in the 71st Regiment, to which corps he was immediately gazetted an ensign.

In a play which Bernal subsequently wrote while in the army there is a smart bit of dialogue, which gives us an insight into his own feelings on receiving this intimation. The hero is a young man, a ward named Contraire, in many characteristics not unlike

the author of the play. The scene reads as follows :—

Enter SIR JOHN BUSBY.

Sir John. Frederick, my boy, I'm glad we're alone. I've an agreeable surprise for you. I know your spirit. I was your poor father's dearest friend, so don't be surprised or tease me with your thanks. I hate being thanked. Without consulting anybody, not even Bromsgrove (another guardian), I have procured you a commission. The first Mr. Pitt was a cornet of Horse.

Contraire. A commission, Sir John ?

Sir John. You'll be in the next Gazette. What do you stare at ?

Contraire. Really you have taken me by surprise. I had almost determined on following another profession.

Sir John. I see how it is : Bromsgrove has been turning your head with his new-fangled notions.

Contraire. Not at all, Sir John, but after mature reflection I do not think myself suited for the army.

Sir John. Not suited ! What do you mean ? It requires no education.

Contraire. I prefer the less obtrusive course of business.

Sir John. Business ! what do I hear !

Contraire. An opportunity offers, and I have determined to become a Russian merchant.

Sir John. A what ? Is the boy gone mad ? Consider your station, your family. Here's depravity ! Frederick, reflect—what can be so honourable as the army ?

Contraire. And so ill-paid !

Sir John. The envy of the men.

Contraire. Apothecaries' apprentices !

Sir John. The delight of the women !

Contraire. Milliners' maids !

Sir John. And then if you are fond of travel, what opportunities of seeing the world !

Contraire. Seeing the world ! Living on the outside of it. Then, after being fried or frozen into premature old age, you retire a half-pay captain, with a chronic cough and unsettled income. Oh ! impossible.

Such, it is well known, were Ralph Bernal's feelings on receiving the news of what was to be his career. Not that he minded leaving the university. Long afterwards, when in the House of Commons, he gave his own regret and reminiscences on the subject. It was in a debate which arose in 1850 on secular education. Sir Robert Inglis in his speech had made the remark that there was a great difference between education and instruction. 'True,' continued Bernal Osborne. 'He had, he was going to say, the honour of being educated at a university; but he would not say so, for he was sorry he had ever been placed at one. There was no portion of his life on which he looked back with more regret than that which he had spent at Cambridge, for there he was instructed in all the vices for which the place was notorious. He looked upon the universities as hindrances to education.'

But the die was cast. Cambridge for him was soon a thing of the past, and in 1832 we find the undergraduate transformed into the subaltern and quartered with his regiment in Edinburgh. Armed with plenty of letters of introduction, he found, as most officers still find, Edinburgh very pleasant. He soon became a favourite, and made innumerable friends, among whom were several members of the household of Charles X., whose court was at that time established at Holyrood.

Among the houses at which he visited was that of Lord Panmure, an old Carthusian. A story told by him in after life gives a curious glimpse of Highland habits fifty years ago. On coming out of the dining-room after dinner at Lord Panmure's, Bernal noticed two stalwart Highlanders in full costume. On inquiring

what they were stationed there for, he was told that they were always posted near to carry the guests up to bed.

Only one fair face seems to have inspired Bernal's muse in Scotland. The following lines are 'an impromptu addressed to Mrs. Dowlazzia at Broughty Ferry, N.B., May 1832.'

That Venus arose from the ocean I knew,
But I thought to Olympus she hied ;
Now my doubts are all vanished, for since I've seen you
I'm convinced she ne'er left the seaside.

Lady C—— tells a story about this time of Bernal's readiness. The colonel and officers of the 71st Regiment were lunching at Lord C——'s beautiful place near Dundee. Bernal's task was to carve a pigeon-pie. It happened that the Colonel's name was Pigeon, against whom Bernal had an old grudge. Accordingly he at once turned to Mrs. Pigeon, and, offering to help her, remarked audaciously, 'Do you like Pigeon? *I don't.*'

But Bernal's residence in Scotland did not last long. Effecting an exchange into the 7th Royal Fusiliers, we find him at Spithead in January 1833. Next at Portsmouth, writing a squib in 'the Guard-room, October 1833,' called 'Recipe for the concoction of a regular officer.' Soon afterwards the regiment got the route, and were embarked in a sailing vessel for Ireland. Bernal, who had at all times a great aversion to the sea, used to recount with horror his reminiscences of the voyage. After three weeks knocking about the Channel the ship was obliged to put back, and when they arrived at Spithead it was reported to head-quarters that the scurvy or itch had

broken out amongst the men. The report was returned with the following jocose minute attached : 'The 7th must scratch on.' The officers of the Fusiliers held an indignant meeting to consider the affront, and the result was that the major sent a challenge to the acting adjutant at Portsmouth, but with what result history does not relate. Finally the regiment arrived in Dublin, where a different life awaited Bernal, fraught with remarkable changes in his future career.

CHAPTER IV.

AIDE-DE-CAMP TO LORD NORMANBY.

DURING the first years of Ralph Bernal's service in Ireland, Lord Haddington was Viceroy, and the Tory party was in the ascendant. The Haddington Administration was by no means popular, and when it went out with the Tory Government in 1835, Irish politics became considerably modified, O'Connell having given up Repeal and allied himself with the Whigs. Lord Haddington was succeeded by Lord Mulgrave, afterwards known as Lord Normanby, who had not long returned from Jamaica, where he had been engaged in carrying out the emancipation of the slaves and the curbing of the western planters' authority. It was whispered in Protestant circles that Lord Mulgrave was to enact a somewhat similar part to the Orange and Protestant party in Ireland, and thus from the outset the new Viceroy had to face the bitter animosity of the Irish Tory party.

The public entrance of the new Lord Lieutenant took place on June 6, 1835. The function was purposely made as imposing as possible. Lord Mulgrave, attired in a light blue button-up surtout with heavy velvet collar and white duck riding-trousers, rode a showy charger all the way from Kingstown to Dublin, and returned the cheers and public salutations

of the crowds with the most marked affability. As the procession passed the north side of Merrion Square, where many of the fashionable of the Tory party resided, the new Viceroy saw the first signs of the bitterness of Irish politics. All the blinds were pulled down—apparently the houses were deserted. The gay horseman, however, nothing daunted, gazed persistently at the windows, and catching here and there some curious woman's eye peering at the side of a blind, he doffed hat at once and bowed acknowledgments even to so scant a tribute of popularity.

In person Lord Mulgrave was well fitted for a post where a strong personal individuality plays an important part. In talents, accomplishments, habits, figure, and dress, he was an ideal Viceroy, at least as then imagined. His *rôle* was evident from the first. He gathered round him the most brilliant, showy, and talented household it was possible to find, and spared no effort to conciliate all classes. In this of course he failed. The day after the Viceregal entry, the cynics of Kildare Street Club, the stronghold of the Tory party, asked each other, 'What do you think of Timour the Tartar?' and the nickname stuck to Lord Mulgrave for many a day.

A vacancy occurring upon his staff soon after Lord Mulgrave arrived in Dublin, Lieutenant Ralph Bernal, of the 7th Royal Fusiliers, was offered the post of extra aide-de-camp, and entered immediately upon his duties. The court to which he found himself attached soon became famous for its brilliance and dissipation; indeed, it was frequently compared by the purists of the day to the court of Charles II. Lord Mulgrave, as we have said, was well fitted to act the part of Viceroy. Lord Morpeth was Chief Secretary.

Thomas Drummond, as private secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant, brought one of the finest characters and most cultivated and yet practical minds to bear upon the solution of the Irish difficulty. His celebrated aphorism that 'property has its duties as well as its rights' has been more quoted perhaps in regard to Ireland than any other philosophic maxim of the century, and his death at the Viceregal Lodge threw a gloom over Dublin society.

Then there was the brilliant Frank Sheridan, son of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and one of Bernal's most intimate friends. The aides-de-camp were as gay a band of young officers as ever danced in St. Patrick's Hall. They were Captain the Hon. G. A. F. Liddell; Captain R. Williams, 'handsome Bob Williams' as he was called; Lieutenant S. R. Conroy; Captain the Hon. R. Boyle; Captain Francis Macnamara, 8th Hussars, whose father was member for Clare and O'Connell's second in his famous duel with D'Esterre; Lieutenant Stanley, afterwards Sir John Massey Stanley; Lieutenant Hon. T. D. G. Dillon, Lieutenant Henry Rowles, Lieutenant W. Murray, Lieutenant Andrew Browne, Lieutenant G. B. Napier, Captain H. W. Barron, Mr. Fitzwilliam Hume, and Lieutenant G. Gossett, now Sergeant-at-Arms in the House of Commons.

The court of Lord Normanby (as he soon became) played a very important and conspicuous part in Irish society and Irish politics. To his experience in that court must be largely attributed the accurate knowledge of the country which in after life Bernal Osborne displayed. The principal object of Lord Normanby's policy was, in plain words, to make the Catholic Emancipation Act a reality, and to convert his court

into a means of pacifying the Irish people. Accordingly numerous levees, triumphal processions, provincial gaol deliveries, distribution of places, a programme of wholesale popularity-hunting—these were the functions in which Ralph Osborne had to play a considerable part. For countenancing the ‘Papists,’ Lord Normanby’s court was cut by the Protestant gentry, and thus Bernal saw in strong relief the two great parties in Irish politics. The insight which he then gained doubtless influenced the opinions he afterwards held on the Viceroyalty, and on the disestablishment of the Irish Church.

But, politics notwithstanding, never before or since was Dublin so royally entertained by the Queen’s representative. Lord Normanby used to ride about the streets and squares of Dublin, accompanied by a brilliant escort. He attended the Theatre Royal frequently. Scanning the circles with his lorgnettes from the Viceregal box, to see who were present, he would despatch an aide-de-camp, between the acts, with invitations to a *petit souper*, and at these pleasant entertainments the most beautiful women and the wittiest men in Dublin were to be found. The charming daughter of ‘Pamela,’ Lady Guy Campbell, on such an occasion shed the lustre of her beauty and wit upon the scene, while Bernal and Sheridan especially shone, singing Moore’s melodies without accompaniment while sitting round the table, or engaging each other in some battle of humour.

Thus Bernal made a host of friends. With Frank Sheridan he was always to be seen arm in arm, and these two concerted many a political and literary scheme together. Once they nearly carried a practical joke too far by sending a card of invitation

for a party at the Castle without permission, and the result was a somewhat disagreeable fracas. Even amongst his own friends Bernal's incorrigible taste for ridicule brought him into some trouble. The massive John Massey Stanley had been one day assailed somewhat too persistently by Bernal's banter, and at last, losing his temper, said, 'I'll tell you what it is, Ralph. God Almighty has been very equal in the distribution of his gifts; he has given you a tongue, and he has given me a leg. Now, the next time you use the tongue I'll use the leg.'

But meanwhile, amidst all the gay life of a court, Bernal still kept up his literary predilections. Moving much between Dublin and London, he soon became acquainted with the *beau monde*, and could not resist the temptation to give a rapid survey of London society. Accordingly the 'New Sporting Magazine,' in September 1838, published from his pen a clever sketch, in verse, of London society, called 'The Chaunt of Achilles,'¹

' THE CHAUNT OF ACHILLES.

'Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of human kind pass by.'

GOLDSMITH'S *Traveller*.

Long had that statue, rais'd by British fair
To Arthur's fame, deplor'd the wintry air,
But thinly clad, the bronze, yet *unbreech'd* form,
Unheeded mourned the peltings of the storm;
For him no friendly M'Intosh was nigh,
To brave the showers of a threat'ning sky:
Even in Pall Mall East he had preferr'd
To sit in *breeches*, like old George the Third;
Or once more don the petticoat* in sport,
As when of old *philandering* at court;
But fate forbade, and musing on his lot,
Achilles cursed the taste of Westmacott!

* The ladies and country gentlemen must refer to Lempriere for Achilles's very *reprehensible* conduct to Deidamia, when disguised as a female at the court of her father.

supposed to be uttered by the statue of Achilles in Hyde Park, in which all the prominent personages of

Wondering why English ladies turn'd him forth
A naked stranger, in the chilling North !
This season, roused by Summer's genial time,
His pent-up feelings sought relief in rhyme ;
Surpris'd he saw full many a novel face
Flock in the Park, and loiter at his base ;
French, Turkish, Russian, Prussian, Austrian, beaus,
With names unknown in poetry, or prose :
Then first the Statue loos'd his brazen tongue,
Survey'd the ring, and thus Achilles sung.

Nymphs of St. James's, wake a fitting song,
To British beauty, noblest strains belong :
The Austrian Princess*—Zavadousky's† charms—
Putbus's coach, or Soult renown'd in arms,
Delight no more ; unnotic'd in the scene,
Rolls the gilt carriage of the Prince de Ligne :
Yon dark barouche, with proudly stepping greys
Demands my notice, and inspires my lays :
See, where Victoria comes along the ride,
At once her sex's ornament, and pride,
Bowing around she blandest smiles bestows,
And wins new admiration as she goes.

But lo ! where following on his chesnut dark,
The grinning G[ardne]r gallops down the Park ;
Slow in the senate, tho' not wanting sense,
Quick in retort, but quicker at a fence ;
With him no hunter ever dare refuse,
His hand so perfect, *damnable* his muse ! ‡
Strange tho' for years I've listen'd to the crowd
Who canvass character, the rich, and proud ;
Of him alone, as yet I never heard
One kindly action, or approving word ;
Sparing of cash, he ne'er outruns his bounds,
And S[uffel]d keeps, whilst G[ardne]r hunts the bounds.—
Next 'neath my gaze a fairer rider comes
On well-bred bay, the far-fam'd Nelly Holmes !
The dark blue habit which her figure decks
Alone proclaims she's of the '*softer sex* ;'
For who 'mongst men, no matter what his weight,
Can charge like her, a bull-finch or a gate ?

* The Princess Schwartzberg, wife of the Extraordinary Ambassador.

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‡ *Vide* his rhymes in the Book of Beauty.

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the day were satirized or hit off in a few racy couplets.
A note in Bernal's handwriting in a copy of the

Patting the crest of his well-manag'd steed,
Proud of his action, D'Orsay vaunts the breed :
A coat of chocolate, a vest of snow,
Well brush'd his whiskers, as his boots below ;
A short-napp'd beaver, prodigal in brim,
With trousers tighten'd to a well-turn'd limb ;
*O'er play, o'er dress extends his wide domain,
And Crockford trembles when he calls a main ;
No joys for him can vulgar pleasures yield,
Good taste his forte, he sticks to Chesterfield ;
Surrounding dandies vainly ape his dress,
By him George Wombwell sinks to nothingness :
His fate is destin'd round Hyde Park to prance,
For ne'er again he'll view the shores of France ;
He left his *name behind* in tradesmen's *books*,
The boast of tailors, and the pride of cooks !
W[itton]'s pale Countess of her lineage proud,
Urges her phaeton thro' the admiring crowd ;
Diana's self could scarcely match the team,
That fairy body, and those steeds of cream !
Whilst on his switch-tail'd bay, with wand'ring eye
Attenuated W[itto]n canters by ;
His character how difficult to know,
A compound of psalm tunes and Tally-ho !
A forward rider half inclin'd to preach,
Tho' not dispos'd to *practise* as to *teach*,
An amorous lover, with the *saintly twist*,
And now a *sportsman*, now an *organist*. †

But hail, kind patron of the art I love,
(For when at Troy like Chesterfield I drove,)
Like him behind a *done-up Trojan* had,
Hector, as he has Cotton for his oad !
Of all the drags that issue from his street
What team so match'd, what equipage so neat ?
Following his track succeeds a numerous band,
Who vainly strive to work their fours in hand ;
For Richmond bound, I view them passing by,
Their hands unsteady, and their reins awry ;
Some scratch their panels, some their horses' knees,—
Beaufort and Payne, I class ye not with these :

* Consult lines on Charles XII. *Vanity of Human Wishes.*

† *Vide* his performances at the Chapel Royal.

magazine runs thus : ' Received from Editor for Chaunt of Achilles 15*l.*, by R. Bernal, jun.'—a memorandum

For who so smoothly skims along the plain
As Beaufort's duke ? What whip can equal Payne ?
No matter, dinner comes, when all are able
To drive their coaches well *about the table* :
Ricardo then can driving feats relate,
And Bathyany swear he *clear'd* the gate !
Till midnight closes o'er the festal scene,
Then who so bold as ride with Angerstein
He who can mark aloft, with unmov'd nerve,
His wheeler's jibbing, whilst his leaders swerve,
And sit all careless 'midst the wordy war,
And break a linch-pin, or a splinter bar !

Shame to my judgment, have I look'd so long,
Nor mark'd yon fair equestrian in the throng ?
Kind Nature gave benignant at her birth
A form of beauty, and a heart of worth :
She sits her courser with a native grace,
Mirth in her eye, good humour on her face ;
Helen herself would suffer by her side,
For Helen never could be taught to ride :
She goes ; *e'en Bronse* must feel a pang at parting
From one so fair as Mrs. [Mountjoy Mart]yn !

On snow-white charger capering down the Row,
With glass in eye rides London's oldest beau ;
Not Lincoln S[tanhop]e can presume to vie
With him in years, or love of *wiggery* ! *
For vainly Time has toil'd his fire to quench :
Stanhope's a *chicken*, when compar'd with Trench.
Still in small boots he crams his gouty feet,
And shuffles careless down St. James's Street,
Lisps '*how d'ye do ?*' with *interesting* air,
Switches his cane, and hovers round the fair.

Turn we a different genius to survey—
Where Joseph 'homeward plods his weary way.'
Blind to the throng, for appetite he rides,
And kicks with spurless heel his lumbering hackney's sides.

Oh ! if Atrides could arise on earth,
And view that Greece which gave our glories birth ;
Not all the time-worn brass upon thy face,
The niggard shrewdness which proclaims thy race,

* Query *wiggery* : consult Messrs. Truefitt !

which sets at rest an authorship long a matter of controversy.

Not all the impudence thou canst assume,
Would save thee from his vengeance—Joseph Hume ! *

In green barouche, two giants at the back,
Drawn by four bays, behold the dame Camac !
Whilst capering near upon a sorry mount,
Spurr'd, and bewhisker'd, see M[etaxa]'s Count !
A brother Grecian—I approve his aim,
Jointures allure, and widows are fair game.—
His right arm resting in a dear-won sling,
Cas. gallops wildly round the peopled ring,
Not really haughty, tho' in manner vain,
He looks, and is a gentleman in grain !
Whilst laughing by his side, see ' Handsome Jim,' †
The friend of frolic, and the ' soul of whim.'

Shade of Old Mellish, could thy spirit view
Glengall's white ponies in the chaise of blue !
See thy own *quarterings* on the panels glare,
Struck by the change, thy very ghost would stare !
Whilst Lady Edward, free from all reproach,
Mourns her lost Lord, the driver of a coach !
Pinks at their buttons, simpers on their lips,
The *thinnest* bridles, and the *thickest* whips,
Survey yon group, each mounted on a screw,
Their heads all bushy, and their coats all blue ;
Spring Captains these, who with the whitebait come,
Then leave for ' stables,' and a barrack room !
Here oft I see with pensive manner, mild,
And hat well back, the taper-waisted Child, †
While some choice Subaltern, his mother's pride,
Steep'd in Macassar, lounges by his side ;
Here Jocelyn cuts the Adjutant awhile,
And drills his massive visage to a smile.

Mark where Dick Hodgson presses with his cab,
The boy so small, he well might serve Queen Mab ;
Tho' D'Orsay's dwarf be clad in neater dress,
Yet Hodgson's *tiger's* ' beautifully less.'
Would ye like him possess a baby page
To charm all hearts and grace your equipage ;
List, ye fair dames who little treasures prize,
Puppies, and pages, of the smaller size.

* Achilles has not forgotten the M.P.'s share in the Greek loan.

† For further particulars apply to the 1st Life Guards.

‡ Better known in the 12th Lancers.

This was followed by a similar sketch put into the mouth of the statue of George III. in Cockspur Street, and entitled 'George the Third in reply to Achilles.'¹ It appeared in the same magazine, April 1839.

'First catch your animal,' by times begin
To check his growing, with a *pint of gin*,
For breakfast this : on salads let him feed,
Thus by degrees you'll gain a *dwindled* breed.
Pigmies in green and gold shall grace your hall,
And tiny lap-dogs on your carpets crawl.

Alas ! too soon the season gliding by
Leaves me as wont in *breechless* misery.
September comes, when carriages decrease,
And naught remains but Life Guards and Police !
London's a desert ; now no more I see
Beaufort's gay carriage, Jersey's vis-à-vis ;
No spruce barouche my weary eye surveys,
All, all, are fled, except a single chaise !
Haply there rattles thro' the evening's gloom,
The one-horse chariot of inconstant Brougham ;
Or butcher Savage shows his coach of red,
The harness vulgar, and the team ill-bred !
Then once a week there canters thro' the Park
Some city swell, or Foreign Office clerk ;—
Such sights alone disturb my reveries,
Thus left in solitude to fret, and freeze.

Roll on, ye months, and to my sight give back
My ancient cronies, Stanhope and Camac.
Friendship alone can soothe *metallic* woes,
And Summer compensate for want of clothes.

PAT-ROCLUS.

'GEORGE THE THIRD IN REPLY TO ACHILLES.

'Sedet, æternumque sedebit
Infelix.'—VIRGIL, *Æn.* vi.

'His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.'—*John Gilpin.*

Whilst you, Achilles, stationed in the Park,
Survey each flaunting dame, and giddy spark,
How little do you prize your happy fate,
What place so cheerful as the Hyde Park Gate ?
Still must you mourn, and chant ideal woes,
Still fancy happiness consists in clothes !

One other piece of verse by Bernal about this period found its way into print, viz., 'A marriage in high life,'

Cease, bilious Grecian, at your lot to rail,
Know, for thy post, I'd sacrifice my tail !
Bootless and breechless be resigned to ride,
Nay quit my steed, Sir Frederick Trench's pride,
Content for aye thro' wintry months to pine,
Could I exchange my present base for thine !

List my complaint, an effigy of rank,
I prance obnoxious to the neighbouring bank,*
And tho' I sit obsequious day by day,
With hat in hand, to soothe them o'er the way ;
They feel no reverence for a royal head,
A foe to Wyatt, W[illia]ms† cut me dead !
Croker in vain my various praises sings,
He can see merit e'en in brazen kings :
Alas ! the public, in my praises mute,
Libel my pig-tail, and decry my brute.
But verse has power to calm a statue's grief,
And secret sorrows find in print relief ;
Since, then, Achilles sought *his* cares to tell,
I'll give my observations from Pall Mall !

'Tis true, the season's unpropitious time
Is scant in subjects to adorn a rhyme ;
For not as yet at Crockford's club unite
Th' empassioned punters, blackest birds of night !
G[ardner] and S[uffield], those twin babes of grace,
To Melton draw the lovers of the chase ;
And every fop who owns a trotting hack,
Mounts a red coat, and prates about the pack ;
How changed that pack ; no music warms their throats,
When S[uffield] gave his *cheque*,‡ they lost their *notes* ;
Reversed the order now 'twixt man and brute,
The men *give tongue*, the hounds, *sad dogs*, are mute :
But who to blind indifference would yield,
And hunt with them, when Ches. is in the field ;
Or pay his cash, to further S[uffield]'s ends ?
Whilst he has *hounds*, you'll say, 'he's sure of *friends* ;'
The hunting o'er, his motto, '*catch who can*,'
'A stud for sale,' thus '*exit Caravan* !'
Good luck go with him, wheresoe'er he run,
So we get back a man like E[rrington].

* The Messrs. Ransom.

† Vide his application to the Court of Chancery.

‡ Upwards of 2,000*l.* were paid for this *once* excellent pack.

which was published in the 'New Sporting Magazine,'
October 1839. Probably the somewhat ambitious five-

An English gentleman without pretence,
Who by loose language never gave offence ;
Far different from the Book of Beauty's peer,
Amphibious G[ardne]r, jock and sonneteer !
Oh ! why, rash lordling, risk your little fame
By writing verses ? when your muse is lame !
Stick to the pig skin, and give up the bard,
Your forte is *riding*, and not *writing hard* ;
On hunting mornings this may cloak each sin,
You sink to nothing when a frost sets in !
Ah ! give *me* frost, and snow, for then return
From various counties all the friends I mourn !
Tho' haply some there are, not given to roam,
Who thro' all seasons, stay like me at home ;
For them no hunter seeks the covert's side,
But day by day down Rotten Row they ride ;
For them no pointer steals the stubble o'er
Averse to sports, e'en shooting is a bore !
Perchance, when water-carts proclaim the spring,
For Greenwich, or Blackwall, they plume their wing ;
There in some inn's dark room they dine in state,
On tasteless souchy, or insipid bait ;
Gaze o'er the Thames, when champagne warms the blood,
Whilst urchins dive for half-pence in the mud ! *

Queen of this band, behold a portly dame,
Gifted with fortune, and well known to fame ;
For beauty once, but now for dinners prized,
And novels, by *another hand revised* ;
Winter, and summer, autumn, spring, roll on !
Fixed thro' all months, see Lady B[lessing]ton !
Bards and Sub-editors infest her rout,
With peers renowned for nothing—but the gout !
Skilful, both truth and flattery to blend,
A steady hater, but a constant friend !
Long may she ride, from care and sorrow free,
Luxurious votary of a vis-à-vis.

Prince of unblemished boots, and short napped hat,
I sigh to mark thy figure growing fat !
In vain you strive to emulate a lath,
And seek for thinness in the vapour bath ;

* One of the Greenwich diversions.

act piece, of which mention has already been made, was written during Bernal's life at Court. It is called 'The

Fate gave the word, tho' tide, and season staunch,
And martyred D'Or[sa]y struggled with a paunch !
Hook chuckled fondly o'er his swelling size,
And old Lyne S[tephe]ns ey'd him with surprise !
Assembled dandies viewed the boding storm,
And called a meeting o'er the pamper'd form :
' *His waist is going !* ' cried the envious crew ;
Then W[ombwel]l smirked, ' *Why not his whiskers too ?*
In some great coat his corpulence he'll hide
Forswear the town, and dwell by the sea side ! '

Pause we awhile, another to survey,
Where A[urio]l fidgets, on his cantering grey ;
Talk not to him of fields, or babbling brooks,
Hyde Park boasts turf, and Chesterfield breeds rooks ! *
Tho' once the love of travel fired his soul,
When Ross, and Parry, shiver'd to the pole ;
One morn at ten he left his downy bed,
And gave this order—' *Horses for Spithead.*
But who his lax geography can blame ?
Portsmouth and Plymouth are to him the same.
The astonished valet heard him with a stare,
And sparrows ceased to twitter in May Fair ;
Next all these various prodigies to crown,
Old Crocky wept, when A[urio]l left town !

But come thou friend, thro' many a season true,
Fixed as a public building in my view :
What tho' no more you play your guinea whist,
You still adorn, thank fate ! the pension list !
Still pass your days in struggling for a waist,
And fondly think that Farebrother is chaste !
Still love to linger o'er a friend's champagne,
And for a dump still back your favourite main ;
Dull, and cantankerous, tho' king A[ll]e[n] be
King George must own a weakness yet for thee !
Not so when P——e lounges at my base,
A faithful follower, with a loving face ;
I own no truer subject, but confess
Despite his constancy, I love none less ;
He versed in all the wooer's wily arts,
Leads *forlorn hopes*, against rich maidens' hearts,
And vainly leads, by men, and maids condemned ;
An old umbrella is his only friend !

* See the rookery in May Fair.

Best Society, or L.S.D.,’ and was read by some of the leading actors of the day, with a view to its production

My eyes turn from him ; turn we to survey
Where peers, and members, pass me on their way ;
Unnumbered politicians by me steal,
Do my eyes fail ? Sir Francis joined with Peel ?
I gaze anew, and mark the well known suit,
That low shirt collar, and that high top-boot,
Can this be B[urde]tt ? once I knew him well,
A noisy spouter, and mob oracle !
Methinks I see him in that by-gone hour,
A prisoner sent for treason to the Tower,
Or from his chosen hustings hear him rail,
Whilst turnips fly, and fists o’er sense prevail !
But times are changed, the ancient watch is gone,
And ‘ *England’s Glory* ’ walks with P[ee]l alone !

To him a long, and straggling band succeeds,
Their politics uncertain, as their creeds ;
Welcome a Tory, tho’ not less a bore,
I knew thee formerly as T[ullamor]e !
A politician now, but empty still,
The House of Lords can boast its Ch[arlevill]e !
Yet ’gainst his sense ’twere hard a doubt to breathe,
Whilst by his side there saunters Lord W[estmeath] !
Hail, happy pair ! by no strait vests confined,
Strange that betwixt ye both ye have one mind,
But stranger still, that Ireland all should own
These twin extremes, of corpulence and bone !
Next sitting *sack wise* on a well-fed black,
The lazy M[elbour]ne kicks his lazier hack,
Since Epicurus’ precepts are his boast,
In ease, and indolence, he rules the roast ;
A Minister how different from Pitt !
He strains at brevity, but fails in wit ;
Bluff in the Lords, and oft to joking prone,
See him a supple courtier by the Throne ;
Plain in his manners, and devoid of state,
Pleasing at dinner, husky in debate
Aye striving to preserve a golden mean,
And hold at once the populace and Queen !
Reform still presses, shall he further go ?
H[ow]ick says, Yes, his love of quiet, No !
Farewell, my M[elbour]ne, short will be thy rule,
For Durham schemes to push thee from thy stool !
Swayed by no party, quite unused to bend,
A bitter enemy, and dangerous friend.

on the stage. It, however, never saw the foot-lights.¹

In 1838 the poet Moore and his son were in

Now leagued with Lyndhurst, now combined with Hume,
 Now rallying both, observe capricious B[rougha]m,
 A patient advocate, a hasty judge,
 His public spirit springs from private grudge :
 Speeches replete with argument, and sneers,
 Puzzle the lawyers, and strike dumb the peers ;
 No *pet abuses* can evade his search,
 E'en bishops shiver, when he names the church ;
 Reform, and science, in his eyes find grace,
 But all his serious thoughts are set on *Place* ?
 Far different he from Fame's most favour'd son,
 Statesman, and hero, honest Wellington !
 Whose right ambition leads to nobler aims,
 Than mob hurrahs, or dinners at St. James ?
 Mark him alike 'gainst fear and passion steeled,
 Lead in the Lords, or battle in the field,
 The same good sense distinguishes each act,
 Unflinching honesty, and love of fact :
 Say, then, shall Wyatt with his mean design,
 Mount Britain's pride upon a steed like *mine* ?
 Shall twaddling T[ren]ch, his secret influence lend ?
 A private job defeat a public end !
 Rise, ye subscribers all, declare your fiat,
 And use your veto against T[ren]ch and W[ya]t !

G. R.

1

5 Clarence Terrace, Regent's Park, Aug. 19, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have read your comedy, and, in perfect sincerity, with very great pleasure. The author ought to write a better, and if he has energy and ambition to apply himself to the task he will. The characters are well sketched, but they must be called sketches ; there is a good deal of humour, but occasionally it becomes too farcical. There is abundance of smartness, but it is sometimes not quite apropos. It is so near success, that I assure you it is with very great regret I return it to you. It would probably succeed at another theatre ; but if I were its author, I would prefer using the experience of this, and any part of its material that might present itself, in another composition, to the publication of this, even if successful. If this opinion is received as wanting in compliment to the piece itself, let it be ascribed to the confidence I hold in the talents of the author.—I remain, my dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

Ralph Bernal, jun. Esq.

W. C. MACREADY.

Dublin on a visit. In going to dine with Lord Morpeth he had a whimsical adventure. The day before he had been at the Chief Secretary's lodge, and seeing one of the cabs of the period, or *shanderadans*, as they were called, he hailed it. Thinking it was the same driver who had driven him to Lord Morpeth's, Moore simply said, 'Go to the same place you took me to the other evening.' After a longer drive than usual, but not anticipating a mistake, the house was reached and the announcement was made that dinner had commenced. After a little delay Moore and his son were ushered into the Lord Lieutenant's dining-room where were himself, Lady Normanby, and the aides-de-camp only, seated at dinner. Nothing could be kinder than the reception given by Lord Normanby to the poet and his son, and they had both been seated and helped to soup before the actual fact flashed upon Moore's mind of what he had done. 'Good God!' he exclaimed, 'what a mistake I have committed!' 'What,' said Lord Normanby, laughing, 'were you to dine with Morpeth? That's excellent. Now we have you we'll keep you.' A messenger was sent to inform the Chief Secretary of what had happened, and the dinner passed off most agreeably. It was afterwards in the drawing-room that Bernal was asked to render some of Moore's own melodies, which he did with such expression and taste that Moore was sensibly affected and declared that he had never heard anyone approach Bernal's interpretation of his words and music.

Whilst in Dublin Bernal had a somewhat romantic experience. Mr. H——, a gentleman of position and property in the county of Wicklow, made his acquaintance and appeared to have taken an especial fancy to him. He asked him frequently to dine, and in fact

threw out very broad hints that he might leave him his heir. This idea was more particularly given one evening when Mr. H—— asked Bernal to dinner in order to meet his agent, Mr. F——, whom he pointedly introduced as ‘a gentleman with whom you will have some day to do business.’ Three years afterwards Mr. H—— died. Bernal, who was in England at the time, was written to and came over for the funeral. The will was read, but the only mention made of his name was in connection with a small box of private letters which was bequeathed to him.

In 1841 the dissolution of Parliament came, and a general election resulted in a change of Government. Lord Normanby left Ireland, and accordingly Bernal’s occupation as a courtier came to an end.

CHAPTER V.

CHIPPING WYCOMBE.

A BROAD clean street in a Buckinghamshire valley constituted in 1841 the free and independent borough of Chipping Wycombe. With a population of 6,299 and a registered electorate of 298, by some combination of good luck and good management it had escaped Schedule B of the Reform Bill, retained its two members, and was even destined to become famous in the Parliamentary history of England.

In pre-Reform days these representatives had been generally Liberals. Indeed, Wycombe had always kept up a character for Radicalism, and it may possibly be traced to the days of the Civil Wars, for within a few miles Hampden had lived, and the inhabitants of Wycombe from the first had taken up the side of the Parliament. Prior to 1831 the sitting members had been for very many years Sir John Dashwood King and Sir Thomas Baring, one a Tory, the other a Whig, and these in the good old days were elected by some twenty voters, consisting of the mayor, two bailiffs and the burgesses. But when Reform became a burning question Sir John King's good qualities as a local landlord could not balance his Tory views, and accordingly steps were taken to change the representative of Wycombe.

In the middle of the High Street of the town

there is still a long blank wall with a modest-looking door at one end of it, which was and is always kept securely locked. It led then, as it does now, into the Park which surrounded the old family mansion known as the Abbey, and through it came many a Parliamentary representative of Wycombe. Years ago the Abbey had been the seat of the Lansdowne family who still take their title of Earl of Wycombe from the town. In the fine old parish church hard by lie the bones of many of the Petty family, including Lord Shelburne, who concluded the great peace with France. But in 1798 the property and Abbey were disposed of to Mr. Smith, the great London banker, who had just been created Lord Carrington by Mr. Pitt. He had contested and sat for the county of Bucks for twelve years and naturally enough took a great interest in the constituency just outside the little door in the blank wall.

Accordingly, Sir John King was opposed by Lord Carrington's son and heir, the Honourable Robert John Smith, who managed the election with such tact and judgment in the popular interest that the Tory candidate was defeated.

The next chapter in the Parliamentary history of Wycombe is still more interesting. Five miles from the town there is a small manor house, with some fields and gardens, called Bradenham. Here lived in 1831 Mr. Isaac D'Israeli, author of 'Curiosities of Literature,' and father of Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, then twenty-six years old and ambitious to obtain a seat in the Reformed Parliament.

Wycombe was astonished one morning to find that Mr. Disraeli, jun., had issued an address to the electors of the borough, and was resolved to contest the seat at

the next general election. The future Prime Minister of England began his career with energy. There are those alive in Wycombe now who remember hearing Disraeli's voice distinctly several hundred yards up the street as he spoke from the porch of the Lion Hotel. He became rapidly popular. For half a century Wycombe electors had been conducted on a respectable jog-trot system. This sudden incursion, conducted by a clever young man, armed with all the modern artillery of stump speeches and literary squibs, threw Wycombe into unwonted excitement. Amongst his supporters were a Mr. Dupré, a Tory magistrate, and Mr. James Clay, afterwards the Radical representative of Hull. For a long time things went well with him, for people were delighted at the novelty of the excitement.

But Disraeli had made an unusual error. He had begun his canvass too early. In the midst of it, and before the anticipated general election, under the Reform Act, Sir Thomas Baring suddenly retired from the representation in order to stand for Hampshire, where a death vacancy had occurred. The result was a single election under the old system of burgesses. Mr. Disraeli fought under great disadvantages, and his adversary, the Hon. Colonel Grey, the Prime Minister's second son and private secretary, connected also by marriage with the retiring member, was successful. It is interesting to speculate what Mr. Disraeli's subsequent career might have been had he been elected for Wycombe. When he first started he went mainly for the Government and praised Lord Grey. Subsequently he came out on Tory-Radical principles. Some one posted a bill warning electors to beware of him as 'a Tory in disguise!' 'A Tory in disguise!' said Disraeli, alluding to the insinuation

in one of his speeches, 'I will tell you who is a Tory in disguise! It is a Whig in place.'

On two subsequent occasions, in 1832 and 1835, Benjamin Disraeli contested Wycombe, once on Radical principles, assisted with letters from O'Connell and Joseph Hume. But in both contests he was unsuccessful, the influence of the Abbey and Lord Carrington always proving too powerful.

In 1838 the first Lord Carrington died, and was succeeded by his son, the Hon. Robert John Smith. The representation of Wycombe then fell to his first cousin, Mr. George Robert Smith, who sat for the town until 1841. Just before the general election the curious political circumstances occurred which led to the appearance of Ralph Bernal, jun., at Chipping Wycombe. Up to this time Lord Carrington had been a supporter of the Whigs. That party, however, was now in difficulties, and a repeal of the Corn Laws seemed the only possible way to rehabilitate their political prestige. To this proposal Lord Carrington could not consent. Not so the member, Mr. George Robert Smith. He was an advocate of Anti-Corn-Law principles, and voted for the Government accordingly. The immediate result of this independent action was that relations between the Abbey and the member for Wycombe became 'strained,' and when the dissolution came Mr. Smith did not seek re-election. The constituency itself knew nothing of the altered state of political opinion at the Abbey, and was marvelling at the non-appearance of the late member.

One day there drove into the High Street of Wycombe two travelling carriages, which stopped at the Lion Hotel, and out of them stepped Mr. Freshfield, the eminent solicitor and family lawyer to Lord

Carrington, and Mr. Alexander, a sun-burnt West Indian merchant. It very soon was bruited abroad that these two gentlemen were electioneering. Not only was an address put forth, soliciting the suffrages of the electors on Conservative principles, but canvassing was commenced, and a meeting was held, in which it soon became evident that the new comers were supported by the Abbey interest. The result was a very stormy and interrupted meeting of voters, and that night the leaders of the Independent Liberal party in the town formed a committee, of which Mr. Lucas was the chairman, to decide what was to be done. A note was sent to Mr. Smith, asking him if he had resigned his seat, and the answer was in the affirmative.

To all appearances the constituency was in the hands of the Tories. There was no time to lose. Accordingly a deputation started at once in a post-chaise to London in search of a Radical candidate. Lord Lansdowne was first consulted, and he advised Mr. Lucas to go to Mr. Vizard, the Secretary of the Reform Club, and make inquiries. He mentioned at the same time that he thought they could not do better than apply to Captain Ralph Bernal, a young man about town, of good address and appearance, and eagerly awaiting an opportunity of entering public life. Two candidates were interviewed before Bernal. He, little dreaming of what was coming, was just then fresh from Dublin, talking politics in the Reform Club, with a few hundred pounds in his pocket, ready to be invested in an electioneering adventure. No sooner was the subject broached by the deputation than the ex-aide-de-camp took it up with characteristic force and ability. Questioned as to his views, his answers created a highly favourable opinion, and the impression formed by Mr. Lucas of his ability and

character was afterwards so fully confirmed that he ever after remained his firm political friend and ally.

Bernal was not long in issuing his address.¹ At his club it was thought the height of folly and presumption for a young and unknown man to attempt to fight the Abbey interest in Wycombe, and when Bernal's name was mentioned in political circles just then it generally drew forth the remark, 'Oh! is that the fool who thinks he is going to beat Lord Carrington?' Notwithstanding all such contemptuous banter Bernal was nothing daunted, and he determined to put forth all his powers to win Wycombe. Taking his old associate and Court comrade, Frank Sheridan, down as

¹ To the Free and Independent Electors of the
Borough of Chipping Wycombe.

GENTLEMEN,—Having learned the intended retirement of your respected representative George Robert Smith, Esq., and that also two gentlemen of completely opposite views in politics are canvassing your votes in the event of a dissolution of Parliament, I beg to announce my intention of asking your suffrages on the principles espoused by your present members; to those principles it is almost unnecessary for me to advert, further than in the following general view:—

First.—With regard to the Corn Laws, I wish the poor man to get a cheap loaf—the manufacturer, a remunerating price—and the farmer, adequate protection; these things, I am convinced, will be furthered by the proposed change in the present Corn Laws.

Secondly.—With regard to the Poor Law, it is my ardent desire to assist in the removal of its present severities—to see the honest labourer hold up his head amongst his fellow-men—and the control of the expenditure vested in those hands from which it is derived.

Lastly.—I profess myself the determined opposer of all sinecures, and, the advocate of a rigid system of economy in every department of the State.

I propose to appear amongst you with as little delay as possible, and, after stating my principles in detail, shall have the honour (if you acquiesce in my views), to solicit your suffrages.

Allow me, Gentlemen, to subscribe myself your obedient and faithful servant,

R. BERNAL, Jun.

Eaton Square :
Thursday, June 3, 1841.

his guide, philosopher, and friend, the campaign was begun in earnest.

The second Liberal candidate was Mr. Dashwood, but from the very first, Bernal made his mark and displayed a marvellous aptitude for electioneering business. At the meetings the old political etiquette was for the candidates to address the people in the order of seniority. Accordingly, Mr. Freshfield came first. He had, for four successive Parliaments, represented Penrhyn, but was no orator. Nor was Mr. Alexander eloquent. Mr. Dashwood was a better speaker and drew down loud cheers by an allusion to Wycombe as not likely after all to become 'the pocket borough of a pocket peer.' Last of all came forward Ralph Bernal. He began well. A pretty thing, he said, 'for Chipping Wycombe to be turned into a pool of Bethesda, where political cripples can come and be healed'—an allusion to Mr. Freshfield which was thoroughly relished. Then, dashing into a brilliant stump speech, he drew down thunders of applause by local allusions and smart epigrammatic remarks, establishing there and then a popularity which never once deserted him during the election.

It was, in fact, the vigorous personality of Bernal that won the battle. He was untiring in mind and body. Dashwood had by birth and property good local interest. Bernal depended on his wit entirely. When the Tory opposition put out a squib, or hand-bill, and it was immediately brought into the Liberal head-quarters, the 'Falcon Inn,' he would rapidly run his eye over it and forthwith sit down and write an answer. All the literary missiles of this election came from his ready pen, for his friend Sheridan fell ill almost immediately after his arrival, and was unable to

leave his room. Bernal's old taste for verses stood him in good stead, as a parody called 'James Freshfield, or the new John Gilpin,' bears witness.¹

'JAMES FRESHFIELD, OR THE NEW JOHN GILPIN.'

James Freshfield was a lawyer 'cute,
Some business he did win,
And Tory member late was he
Elected for Penrhyn.

There frequent contests fretted him
And made his pocket feel,
For four successive Parliaments
He stuck like wax to Peel !

Then with bum-bailiffs at his back,
To Wycombe he did wander ;
Along with him he brought his hack
The Tory Alexander !

'Twas long before Lord Carrington
Was suited to his mind ;
At last he took the ' Man of Deeds '
And left poor Smith behind !—

Who giving up, as needs he must
When great relations frown,
Resigned his seat in sudden haste
And sent James Freshfield down.

So down he came, chuck full of pence,
A hired Nominee ;
To aid the poor, his weak pretence ;
His aim Monopoly !

Wycombe, which never in this sort
Had treated been before,
Such men to represent its town
Did stare at more and more.

The Tories brawl'd—the donkeys bray'd,
Each Liberal vote was poll'd.
All honest men cried ' Turn him out,
' We never will be sold.'

The Chandos Club, when they beheld
James Freshfield posting down,
Direct for Chipping Wycombe seat
To horrify the town,

Perhaps the most audacious thing he wrote was a squib conceived in a religious spirit, which might have had some effect in a town where evangelical teaching was very strong. The conclusion of it ran as follows :—
 ‘Remember above all that your decision will be recorded on high, and that you will be called to account for your vote at that dreadful tribunal, when all mankind will be judged, not by professions—but when the blessed will be told, “I was an hungered and ye gave me meat.” Dashwood and Bernal for ever !’

The volley of pasquinades fired at the Abbey had a speedy effect, and in three days Bernal, the forlorn hope of the Liberals, had by mere dash and daring won the seat for his party, and what Disraeli’s ability had failed to gain, Bernal accomplished. On the day of polling, notwithstanding great pressure, the Liberal candidates were returned by considerable majorities, and Captain Ralph Bernal, M.P., who had been caricatured at every club in London, returned triumphantly to town and became the lion of Pall Mall for at least twenty-four hours.

Spake thus unto its neighbouring Peer—
 Once among Whigs, the Pearl ;
 ‘If you’ll support our Freshfield here
 You shall be made an Earl !’

The Peer, who had got all he could
 To further his own weal,
 Declared himself a looker on,
 But told his Steward, Neale !

Who not performing what he meant,
 And gladly would have done,
 Freshfield away from Parliament
 Was forced to cut and run !

Now let us sing long live the Queen,
 And Freshfield, long live he,
 To see the error of his ways,
 Nor die a Nominee !!

CHAPTER VI.

PARLIAMENT, 1841-44.

THE fifth Parliament of her Majesty Queen Victoria met on August 19, 1841, and Captain Bernal lost no time in taking his seat as member for Wycombe. Mr. Kinglake was present in the gallery under the clock reserved for strangers, when his college friend took the oath and his seat. He relates a little incident which illustrates an amusing trait in Bernal's character. After the ceremony Bernal came and sat next to his friend, chatted for a few minutes, when another member, remarkable for his exceedingly shabby hat, sat down close beside him. Bernal, who was himself dressed as sprucely as the most requiring Colonel in the army could wish, looked at the new comer from top to toe with a look of unutterable astonishment. Was it possible that the first assembly of gentlemen in the world could contain a hat so unbrushed and old-fashioned as that? It was with difficulty he restrained himself, and his *sotto voce* remark to his friend was by no means complimentary. But his aversion to bad hats was life-long. Years afterwards his friend, Sir John Trelawney, met him one day in Pall Mall, wearing a very rough headpiece. 'Trelawney,' said Bernal Osborne, 'you must have a left-handed valet; he can't brush your hat!'

The new House commenced business on August

24th. It had long since been known that the Melbourne Ministry must fall, the election which had given Bernal his seat having also given the Tories a majority of 91. We have already seen by the Wycombe election that the repeal of the Corn Laws was the burning political question of the day. Bernal had made the subject one of the principal topics of his electoral campaign at Wycombe, and he was determined to take part in the earliest Parliamentary debate upon the subject.

The Address in answer to the Queen's Speech was moved and seconded by Mr. Marks Philips and Mr. J. C. Dundas, while the amendment, which subsequently and inevitably turned out the Government, was moved and seconded by Mr. S. Wortley and Lord Bruce. Mr. Labouchere spoke next, and Mr. Disraeli followed him. The speech of Mr. Disraeli was full of invective. He accused the Melbourne Government of having attacked the Constitution and insulted the nation, and concluded a bitter peroration by saying that the Whigs held office by abusing the confidence of the Sovereign, and by defying the authority of Parliament.

Then Ralph Bernal rose to make his maiden speech. 'I am surprised, Sir,' he said, 'at the accusations brought forward against her Majesty's Ministers by the hon. gentleman who has just sat down, for, being returned to Parliament by the constituency which rejected the hon. gentleman, I know that he understands free trade in politics very well, and I think that the accusation against her Majesty's Government comes with a peculiarly good grace from him, when I recollect that he went down to High Wycombe with letters in his pocket, one from Mr. O'Connell and the other from Mr. Hume; and when I know he was

proposed by his friend Mr. Treacher, the Radical, and seconded by his friend Mr. Rose, the Tory, I leave it to the House to decide with how great force such a rebuke comes from him. But, gentlemen——'

At this moment Bernal was loudly interrupted by cries of 'Order' and 'Chair.' In the excitement of the moment the young orator was not aware of the breach of order he had committed in addressing himself to the members otherwise than through the Speaker, for he continued: 'I stand before you, gentlemen—for I suppose you are gentlemen'—(here a friendly neighbour whispered to Bernal the mistake he had committed, and he immediately apologized for his hastiness)—'I hope, Sir, the House will make a little excuse for my inexperience; but, Sir, I stand before the House intimately connected with one of the great interests under discussion. By the West Indian interest I must stand or fall, and I declare that I cannot

Compound for laws I am inclined to,
By damning those I have no mind to.

I wish, therefore, to take this opportunity of recording my vote in favour of the reduction of the duties upon sugar, feeling convinced that the best interest and the ultimate prosperity of this country depend much upon the upper classes being willing to make some sacrifices. Having taken the beam out of my own eye, I think I can, with the greater propriety, enter into a discussion of the Corn Laws. The hon. gentleman who has seconded the amendment has very strongly deprecated any discussion of the Corn Laws; and at the same time he has fallen into the error that dear bread and high wages go together. I believe that the arguments upon the Corn

Laws, both *pro* and *con.*, were pretty well understood. Yet, I think, if we refer to an early period and look to the occurrences of 1795, we may learn something. For some years preceding that period the price of wheat had been 54s. a quarter; it suddenly rose to 76s.; there was consequently great distress in the country. The wages of the labourers did not rise, but fell; and the magistrates, when they were appealed to, directed the relieving officers to pay the labourers additional wages out of the poor rates. That was the first instance of wages being paid out of the poor rates, and I ask whether it would not have been better, before we pass the Poor Law Amendment Bill, if we first of all remedied the defects of the Corn Law, and founded a new system of poor laws upon a new system of corn laws. What is the present Poor Law but a direct concession to the landlords and no one else? I wish the landlords would follow my example, for what are we but brother monopolists? Let them accept the eight-shilling duty as a boon now, else it may become

Small by degrees and beautifully less.'

His father was not a member of the House at that time, or probably he would have endorsed his son's determination to advocate the abolition of the sugar duties. Mr. Bernal, senior, had contested Weymouth unsuccessfully at the general election; but his opponents, Viscount Villiers and Mr. Hope, were unseated on petition, and in March 1842 the seats were assigned to him and Mr. Christie. Subsequently, Mr. Bernal sat as Chairman of Committees when the sugar bills were going through the House, and presided himself over the framing of measures which took from him a very large portion of the income arising from his West Indian property.

A few days after Captain Bernal's first speech, Parliament was prorogued, and when it reassembled in February, Sir Robert Peel was Prime Minister, and a Tory Government held office in England.¹

From his first appearance in the House of Commons, Bernal attracted public attention. Sprung from the same race as Disraeli, it was a sufficiently curious coincidence that he should have first contested the identical constituency to woo and represent which Disraeli lost several years of his life. But to commence his Parliamentary career by an attack upon the future Conservative leader was still more curious. The two men, however, became friends at once, and Bernal, though a stern political foe, never lost an opportunity of extolling the genius and indomitable energy of his opponent. It is worthy of note that Mr. Cobden was also first returned to this Parliament, and soon made the acquaintance of Bernal, with whom he became both a friend and a correspondent.

In the session of 1842, Bernal commenced to speak at once, attacking the 'sliding scale' and Peel's policy on the Corn Laws. He also brought his military experience to bear on the question of flogging in the army, of which he was always a strong opponent. Then he spoke in favour of the ballot. With his own election fresh in his memory, he alluded to his personal experience, and declared that great intimidation had been experienced towards his constituents.

'Many an honest and independent voter,' he said,

¹ Sir Robert Peel's Cabinet consisted of Lords Lyndhurst, Wharcliffe, and Haddington, the Duke of Buckingham, Sir James Graham, Lords Aberdeen, Stanley, Ellenborough, Ripon, Elliot, Sir H. Hardinge, Mr. H. Goulburn, Sir E. Knatchbull. The Duke of Wellington held a seat without office; Mr. Gladstone was in the Ministry as Vice-President of the Board of Trade.

'was now suffering from the vengeance of an aristocratic Whig, who was graduating in high Tory principles, and who insisted on his right to do what he pleased with his own.'

Not long afterwards he made a vigorous onslaught on Mr. Sutton, the Under-Secretary for the Home Department, and the Tories generally, for their inconsistency in supporting the Poor Law Amendment Act. 'Those,' he said, 'who had been loud in the denunciation of the Poor Law out of doors, were now rendered mute by the potent wand of the great wizard' (Peel).

Next year (1843), the Government brought in an Arrears Bill for Ireland. Bernal's experiences of Irish politics and Irish life have been already alluded to. From the moment he entered Parliament he never lost an opportunity of speaking upon Irish affairs, and his attitude was always one of conciliation and concession, at a period when such a policy would have rescued Ireland from the hands of agitators. Sir Robert Peel's bill Bernal opposed strenuously throughout. He called it 'an odious measure, and the pilot balloon of coercion, and attributed the miserable state of Ireland to the want of sympathy between the rulers and the ruled.'

In this session there was a good deal of what has since been called 'obstruction' in the debates on the abolition of the Corn Laws. One night, indignant at the dilatory motions for adjournment of the debate, the member for Wycombe jumped up and made a short fiery speech, declaring that the scene which had been enacted would satisfy the world that the proceedings of that House were a mere farce. Whereupon the Speaker called upon him to retract an expression

which must be deemed disrespectful to the House. The expression was accordingly retracted ; but Bernal only altered the terms, and, continuing his favourite dramatic metaphor, said he might at least be allowed to say that their proceedings strongly resembled low comedy.

In July 1843 Bernal was one of the first to speak on Smith O'Brien's motion on the state of Ireland. He strongly advocated the abolition of the Viceroyalty, which, from experience, he declared to be of no use to any party, except to those few who were anxious to avoid the dull routine of regimental duty ! Maynooth he wished to see put on a footing with Oxford and Cambridge. He concluded a speech full of information and apposite quotation thus :— ' Conciliation is the best policy for Ireland, and I would say, in the words of an old divine, that " nothing can come of contention but waste to all, whilst the common enemy will dance on the ashes of us both." '

Again, on the fruitful theme of Ireland, Bernal shortly afterwards attacked Peel, and stigmatized his Arms Act as hateful in principle and contemptible in provision. The Emperor Joseph, he continued, had caused to be written on his tomb : ' Here lies Joseph, whose measures were all unsuccessful,' and he recommended Peel to adopt the epitaph. Thus always flying at the highest game, Captain Bernal soon became known as one of the most daring guerilla freelances on the Liberal side of the House, and his sayings, in and out of Parliament, soon became quoted as the good things of the hour.

Notwithstanding his public labours, Bernal still found time to enjoy his favourite pursuit of hunting and his love for the society of boon companions. In the days when Cheshire was the crack county we

find him at Bretby and Hooton, the head-quarters of the most fashionable hunting men. With the present Lord Winchilsea, then Lord Maidstone, Bernal was intimate. Both were men of high ability, though Bernal could not lay claim to the brilliant academic career of Maidstone. There was always an amusing rivalry between them as to the accuracy of each other's information, and 'how many facts ahead now?' was the favourite piece of banter against Bernal in those days. A hunting ballad, written by Lord Winchilsea, gives a capital contemporaneous sketch of the society in which Bernal was then a well-known figure.¹

Sport was the pastime, politics, however, the real interest of his life. His note-book at this time shows he was reading as closely as ever.

In the House of Commons he spoke often during the session of 1844. The subject of duelling came up, and Bernal was one of those who took a prominent part in its final settlement. He had private as well as public reasons for being interested in the question. The case, long since forgotten, of the duel between Lieut.-Colonel D. L. Fawcett and Lieut. Munro was

¹ Come Bruncker, come Neilson, come Cooper, come Dunn !

Come Bernal, come Bayley, come everyone !

Draw your reins, pull your hats down, and ride till you fall,
There's 'a chiel takin' notes' and *Bell's Life* shall know all.

* * * * *

Where the ditches are deepest and ploughs most infernal,
Comes blundering on that strange fellow Ralph Bernal.

Sentimental at times, bilious often, and then

The hardest to rule of unsociable men,

But when weather is bracing, and dinner agrees,

I know of no man more adapted to please.

He can sing, he can talk, he can quiz, he can act,

He's a pretty tarnation smart hand at a fact.

His failings are these, he makes horrible puns

And sends *Bell's Life in London* account of our runs.

From *Laudes Pudliana*, 1843.

the means of bringing the system before the public. Colonel Fawcett was shot dead, and his wife had been refused a pension on the usual grounds. Bernal took up Mrs. Fawcett's case with ardour, and in Supply moved to have the correspondence on the subject produced, in order, if possible, to obtain a remission of the order refusing the pension. In this he was unsuccessful, but the discussion showed the anomalies of the military code of honour, and was the foundation of public opinion, which grew to such an extent that gradually the system of duelling was entirely abandoned.

During the debate Sir Charles Napier said there was only one way of putting down duelling. He would not allow a duel to be fought unless across a table. First let one pistol be loaded with ball and the other not, and let lots be drawn who shall have the loaded pistol. Then if that had no effect, let both be loaded with ball, and then let the gentleman who was not shot be hanged.

In the same session Mr. Hume brought forward a formal motion for the abolition of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, which was seconded by Captain Bernal. His speech is interesting, as showing the effect upon his mind of his official experience.

Commenting upon the pseudo-aristocracy of the Dublin levées, Captain Bernal excited a good deal of laughter by quoting the following advertisement from *Saunders' Newsletter* :—

Notice.—Gentlemen who propose attending the approaching levée at the Castle can be supplied with a claret brown Court dress on hire for 2s. 6d. per suit each day; secrecy observed. This being the lowest charge made for the hire of a claret brown suit to the humble class of people for teetotal and Repeal processions, fancy balls, &c., there can be no deviation from it.

In the last week of the session of 1844 Bernal attracted attention by a motion with regard to the Irish Church patronage of the Government, in which he bitterly attacked Peel for appointing a series of bishops who were all opposed to the system of national education. One especially, Dr. Daly, bishop of Waterford and Cashel, he denounced as a 'peripatetic prelate.' Peel rose to reply immediately, and made so long a speech in explanation that it is evident Bernal had hit upon and handled a tender subject well. A name came up prominently in this debate, that of Dr. Woodward. He was an eloquent and learned clergyman, the rector of Fethard and the author of a remarkable pamphlet on national education, who subsequently became a great personal friend of Bernal's.

At some time during the first period of his Parliamentary career Bernal published a squib in verse upon the political personages of the day, entitled 'A Voice from Palace Yard.' It is supposed to have been spoken by the statue of Canning, and deals most with characteristics of contemporary men.¹

¹ *A VOICE FROM PALACE YARD!*

Still is it sought to learn the reason why,
With head averted, and disdainful eye,*
I stand, nor point towards the hallow'd spot
Of former triumphs, ne'er to be forgot?
Say, could I view, with aught but lingering pain,
The scene where Peel and treacherous Tories reign?
Can I forget, when urg'd to grant relief
To Irish wrongs, how they forsook their chief?†

* The opening lines clearly explain the cause of what has hitherto been a *vexata questio*—viz. the marked neglect of Mr. Canning in turning his back upon the two Houses of Parliament.—*Vide Statue in Palace Yard.*

† The right hon. gentleman has evidently not yet forgotten the treatment he received from Peel, Wellington, and Co., in May, 1827.

The style and diction of the lines remind us strongly of his earlier efforts in verse. The accuracy

Left me lamenting every broken tie,
Mid stranger friends, to sicken, and to die !
Till call'd to office,* all their pledges scorn'd,
They gave to *clamour* † what their *judgments* mourn'd.

Yet, as I gaze along the crowded streets,
How many a form retentive memory greets !
Changed are some features, and some votes no less ;
Friends of the people, now in courtier's dress !
The wavering Baring, long retired from trade,
Becomes decided, when a *Baron* made ! ‡
Whilst Richmond's Duke, with corn law fancies big,
Blooms a bold Tory, from a timid Whig !

Who comes with nervous twitch, and careless mien ?
The sight astounds me, Brougham with Aberdeen !
Can this be he, who erst my wrath defied, §
The fierce Reformer, with his foes allied ?
Can this be he, who Liberal colours bore !
And boasted ' He was Whig and something more ' ?
Alas ! too true, a Peer of recent date, ||
He vaunts his ancient title in debate !
Nor praises Wellington or flatters France, ¶
Or twits his '*learned friend*' with ignorance !

* On May 1, 1827, Mr. Peel said : ' The nature of my opposition to making concessions to the Roman Catholics will admit of no middle course, since it is founded on the belief that the admission of the Roman Catholics to political power is inconsistent with the *maintenance of the Constitution*, with the *welfare and safety of the Church*. Such being my *sincere* opinions, I found it impossible to remain in office, if my right hon. friend (*Canning*) should be placed at the head of an administration !!!'—*Vide Hansard's Debates*.

† March 17, 1829.—Sir E. Knatchbull on second reading of Catholic Relief Bill : ' Mr. Canning had always been the consistent advocate of the Catholic claims during the whole of his political life ; but the right hon. gentleman (*Peel*) would not assist Mr. Canning in 1827, though he now concedes to the turbulence of the *Clare* election a measure against which he tells us he still retains his former opinions.'—*Vide Hansard's Debates*.

‡ Compare former speeches of Mr. Baring in *House of Commons*, with those of Lord Ashburton in *House of Lords* !

§ See debate, April 17, 1823.

|| See his sneer at the recent creation of Lord Campbell.—*Debates*, March 1844.

¶ Mr., now Lord, Brougham's opinion of the Duke of Wellington, November 8, 1830 :—' I wish that I had not lived to see the day when a forgetfulness of

of the personal touches is quite evident, and though many of them cannot be appreciated by a new

Too vain to follow, yet too rash to rule,
A brilliant advocate, a ready tool,
True to no party, constant to no end,
A reckless enemy, and dangerous friend ;
Feared in the Senate, in the boudoir prized !
He apes the fashion, which his youth despised ;
With Lords and Ladies his delight to mix,
And play the lover's part at sixty-six !
The man whose eloquence made Canning cower,
' Now prattles glibly in a lady's bower ' ! *

Lo ! where with stealthy step and thoughtful eye,
On *two left* legs, Sir Robert shuffles by ! †
With no high qualities to rule the State,
I own that he's unrivall'd in debate.
Who can foresee, or guess his JESUIT ends ? ‡
Head of a party, where he has no friends ! §
For whilst against opposing views he'll fight,
Still in the 'abstract,' he will grant they're *right*.
Aye to his object winds with tortuous twist,
And shines conspicuous as an egotist !
Whether on corn or tariffs he declaim,
Or at a tenants' dinner kills the game !
Hear him at Tamworth, with emotion full,
Present the wond'ring rustics with a *Bull* ! ||

those invaluable services in the field which have made for the Duke of Wellington, as a soldier, and a conqueror, a brilliant and imperishable renown, coupled with a deviation by the noble duke, from his own sphere of life into the labyrinth of politics, and with an *attempt on his part to shine as a statesman*, a character, which nature that formed him a great general *never intended that he should become*.'—*Hansard's Debates*.

* 'He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber,
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.'—*Richard III.*

† Mr. O'Connell originally remarked *the fact* of Sir Robert's legs not *being pairs* !

‡ 'Non meus hic sermo.'—See the remarks of his old ally, Mr. Banks, March 30, 1829: 'The day will arrive when a JESUIT would appear in the State as well as Church ! Such a *Jesuit* he could fancy at some future time in the capacity of *PRIME Minister*, coming down to the House and saying " I have not altered my opinion, but will go directly contrary to it. I do not deny there is evil in what I propose, but I will do evil that good may come." '—*Hansard's Debates*.

§ Surely no Minister was ever so well abused by his own *supporters* !

|| 'I will, regardless of price, give the *best bull* I can find ! There are few more eager sportsmen than I am, but I have no hesitation in saying I will destroy all the *rabbits* on my property.'—*Vide Speech of Sir R. Peel at Tamworth, October 24, 1843.*

generation, still the description of Disraeli as 'Alliterative Dizzy' is most happy and suggestive.

On every theme, his egotism's seen,
I kill'd the *rabbits* ! *I* advised the Queen !
 Crush'd is the lordly pride, which scorned to own
 A Premier whose grandfather was unknown !
 The peers submissive 'neath his buckler run,
 And beg for favours from a spinner's son !
 Welcome, old friend, in whatsoever shape
 Thou com'st, my Goulburn,* genius of red tape !
 A ready reck'ner, with official tact,
 Heavy in speech, though business-like in act !
 Heu ! † '*Nusquam tuta fides* !' can it be
 That Knatchbull's learn'd to bend his stubborn knee ?
 With new-found confidence and place content,
 On the first bench there snores the 'Man of Kent' !
 Tho' scowling *Bradshaw* ‡ raise his loudest note,
 Bradshaw, who's qualified to cheer and vote !
 Tho' *Norreys* § add new discord with his bray,
 And *Hodgson* crow amid the *vocal* fray !
 Knatchbull still slumbers on, is sleeping led
 To give his vote before he's put to bed !
 That 'nothing's wonderful,' hear Peel declare ;
 Who that remember'd Graham || would not stare ?
 Even now before my brazen orbs I see
 The able scribe of 'Corn and Currency ;'

* The Right Hon. H. Goulburn, a thorough master of Cocker's arithmetic, and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

† 'The Right Hon. Secretary (*Peel*) might endeavour to explain the consistency of his conduct, he might attempt an explanation, *but that confidence which had hitherto been accorded to public men had received a blow, from which it never would recover.* "*Nusquam tuta fides.*"'—*Speech of Sir E. Knatchbull, March 17, 1829, Hansard's Debates.* (Since that period, the Member for Kent has become somnolent ! confiding ! and Paymaster of the Forces ! under the man who 'had destroyed all confidence !' but *Nusquam tuta fides* ! !)

‡ Of this gentleman little more is known than appears in the 'Court Guide,' save that he is as vehement in his cheers as his politics, and M.P. for Canterbury !

§ It is rumoured that the noble lord the M.P. for Oxfordshire and the gentleman who sits for Berwick occasionally enliven the dulness of debate by appropriate imitations of birds and beasts !

|| In early days (1818) the right hon. baronet canvassed Hull on ultra-Radical principles ; his address is still extant ; he was in the Cabinet with Lord Grey, and is now Secretary for the Home Department under Sir R. Peel. His next move will be as Governor-General for India if the *Ten Hours Bill* pass !

It was in the season of 1844 that Captain Ralph Bernal, M.P., first saw Miss Catherine Isabella Osborne,

Mark, as of old, that supercilious sneer,
Which graced the Radical, and Pamphleteer !
From all his principles a renegade,*
He now affects a horror of *Jack Cade* ! †
Sir James, ‡ whose notions made e'en Cobbett reel !
Becomes Conservative, and follows Peel !
Of ancient lineage proud, and vast estate,
Impetuous Stanley § rushes to debate ;
Bold, || bitter, fretful, witty, and severe,
Stranger alike to prudence, or to fear !
No ¶ charms for him pacific counsels show,
With every sentence he creates a foe !
Witness the evening when the recreant Whig
Denounced his former friends at *thimble rig* ! **
Of late more silent grown, he takes his stand
As second fiddle in Sir Robert's band !

* * * * *

Behind some lesser stars, advance in row,
Lincoln, †† and *Hope*, with *Smith*, ‡‡ and *Boldero* !

* Speaking of Sir R. Peel, Sir J. Graham said : ' He had no confidence in him ; it was impossible to compose a Ministry of worse materials ; their whole lives had been devoted to oppose good government, and to uphold bad.'—*See Hansard, June 1830.*

† *Vide* Debate, March 25, 1844.

‡ ' Two-thirds of the National Debt has been so unjustly contracted, and for such ill purposes, as not to be binding on the nation, and must eventually suffer from the sponge.'—*Vide ' Corn and Currency,' by Sir J. Graham.*

§ Who that can remember the noble lord, in the year 1830, mounted on a table at Brooks's, denouncing the Duke of Wellington as a despot and what not ! would believe that he is now serving under the Duke's colours, and Secretary of State for the Colonies in the Peel Government ? ! !

|| ' Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,
Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.'

Hor. De Arte Poetica, 121.

¶ ' No joys to him pacific sceptres yield.'

Character of Charles XII. in 'Vanity of Human Wishes.' ..

** *Vide* his attack on what he styled 'The Thimble-rig Administration.'—*Hansard, March 1835.*

†† The manners of the First Commissioner of Woods and Forests are as torpid as those of the Under Secretary for the Colonies are lively.

‡‡ For further information concerning the Attorney-General for Ireland, and the Clerk of the Ordnance, refer to Mr. Fitzgibbon, Q.C., in the Court of Queen's Bench, Dublin, and the Hon. Craven Berkeley, M.P., Brooks's Club.

in London at Her Majesty's Opera, as he walked round that old-fashioned promenade of the theatre

Sulky, and silky, the two first are mute,
The last the muse defines not, *since they shoot!*
See civil Eliot * wears his well-worn smile,
Yet fails to satisfy the Emerald Isle ;
And vainly hopes with words which softly flow,
To butter Irish parsnips, *which won't grow!*

* * * * *

To him succeeds a grave but youthful wight,
Disguis'd Free Trader, open Puseyite !
Gladstone, † for essays fam'd and thought intense,
Declares ‡ Free Trade means nought but common sense,
Yet still declines, tho' godly and elect,
To give his speech, or principles effect !
Mark where the learned Pundits of the Law,
Pollock and Follett, § 'neath my image draw ;
Honour to Pollock ; gainsay it who can,
He, *for a lawyer*, is an honest man !
And Follett, too, though somewhat fond of self,
And not so bent on politics as pelf,
All briefs he takes, in every Court has shone,
And turns with ease from Treason to Crim. Con. !

Mild without cant, and earnest without rage,
A nation's sufferings Ashley's thoughts engage,
His the great aim, to plead the labourer's cause,
And from opposing statesmen win applause.
A motley throng attend his footsteps, blindly, ||
With mumbling Fielden, ¶ and vociferous Hindley !
Tho' Rous ** declares, he values not a d—n
Their votes, or judgment, save upon Qui Tam !

* The Chief Secretary for Ireland, in his amiable endeavours to please every one in that country, has satisfied nobody.

† President of the Board of Trade.

‡ *Vide* Speech on Corn Laws, 1842.

§ Attorney and Solicitor-General at this moment. Probably the former will be Chief Baron before this appears.

|| See list of division on Factory Bill, March 1844.

¶ The Member for Oldham cannot be reckoned among the race (*μερόπων ἀνθρώπων*) of articulate-speaking men ; the Member for Ashton may ; he is pertinaciously distinct, and painfully intelligible !

** *Captain Rous is an excellent specimen of the British navy, but not of its oratory.* 'If he liked to give his servants eight holidays in the week, and the majority of the House of Commons told him he should not do so, he could only

known as the Fop's Alley, arm-in-arm with Mr. Fitz-William Hume-Dick. Miss Osborne was the only

Another, and a smaller troop appears,
Of antique notions, yet of tender years,
Alliterative Dizzy * leads the van,
Whilst Lane Fox † hails him as the 'Coming Man' !
And, to say truth, were Diz of noble race,
His ready genius would demand a place !
With him Smug Peter takes *Young* England's part,
Tho' he's a *chicken* ‡ only at his heart !
Lengthy in speech, and vers'd in Spanish lore,
Save Howard Douglas § there's no greater bore !
Haply there are, who deem Sir Walter James ||
The dullest proser on the banks of Thames !
Smythe, Manners, Cochrane, swell *Young* England's school, ¶
Ferrand *Ferocious*, Milnes ** surnam'd the '*Cool* !'
Approving Oxford lends a warm support,
With Inglis, †† steady to Queen, Church, and *Port* !
Ranged at their post, behold a different gang,
The Low Church saints, 'gainst Sunday sport harangue,
Hear pious Plumptre ‡‡ raise the bigot cry,
And mouthing Hardy shout 'No popery !'
Fremantle, §§ first of whips, renown'd for pairing,
Bustles along, but not so active Baring, |||

say, he would see them—*somewhere else first !* !'—*Debate on Factory Bill, March 25, 1843. For opinions on Qui Tam Actions, see Debate, February 1844.*

* See his turn for alliteration in various speeches—'The *Hurried Hudson* !'
'*Danby in his Dungeon*,' &c. &c.

† In the course of last Session the Member for Ipswich positively affirmed Mr. Disraeli to be the precursor of the Millennium !

‡ See Borthwick and Robertson Correspondence.—*Times*, 1843.

§ M.P. for Liverpool : once a Colonial Governor, and has G.C.B., G.C.M.G., F.R.S. after his name.—*See Parliamentary Guide.*

|| Member for Hull, and very dull !

¶ It would seem the party of 'Young England' is as old as the time of Sir Robert Walpole, since, in one of his speeches, he classes the opposition under three heads, the Tories ! the Patriots, and the Boys !—*Vide Coxé's Life of Walpole.*

** Mr. Richard Milnes, M.P. for Pontefract, has been fortunate enough to find a godfather in the person of the Rev. Sydney Smith, who named him for *his easy manners, and refreshing airiness*, 'The Cool of the Evening !'

‡‡ The worthy, though somewhat rusty-notioned representative for the intolerant University of Oxford is a much pleasanter boon companion than his milk and water opponent, Father Mathew !

§§ East Kent owns one, Bradford the other, for a representative.

||| M.P. for Buckingham, an excellent and deservedly popular official !

||| This amiable and inoffensive gentleman is a Lord of the Treasury and

surviving child and heiress of Sir Thomas Osborne, the eighth Baronet, of Newtown Anner, Clonmel, county

Of late the Treasury and House forgets,
And cuts e'en politics for *pirouettes* !

Time was, ere Ministries became a jest,
When men in office principles profess'd,
Then Tory had a meaning that was known,
A prompt defender of the Church and Throne.
Such was the creed, and well-known rallying cry,
Which scorn'd the doctrine of expediency ;
But now, since honesty is held to blame,
The baffled schemers use another name ;
As if false colours could new vigour give
To men, and measures, call'd Conservative !
If yielding slowly be the Premier's end,
Anxious to please, yet dreading to offend ;
In truth, Sir Robert's but a Whig disguised,
And his, old Melbourne's Cabinet revised !
In Fabian tactics all their wisdom lies,
And all their aim is annual compromise !
The County Members, to whom Peel pays court,
Had they but brains, would pause ere they support,
Pleas'd to the last, they list his flattering tale,*
And lick the hand which trims the sliding scale !

And thou stern Duke, whose influence controls
Obstreperous Peers, as Russia rules the Poles !
Say, dost thou dream an army will ensure
Content in Ireland whilst her wrongs endure ?
Tho' Phillpotts † hear glad tidings in thy speech.
Phillpotts, well skill'd to flatter as to preach,
Perchance those words may rouse th' impending storm,
Recall thy declaration 'gainst Reform ! ‡
Opponents reckon an abuse undone
When its *defects* are prais'd by Wellington !

Assistant Whipper to Sir T. Fremantle, and has been lately taking lessons in dancing from a distinguished Professor at the Opera !

* See lines, ' Essay on Man ' :

' The lamb thy riot, ' &c.

† The Most Rev. the Bishop of Exeter. — *Vide* his remarks on Irish Church, March 1844.

‡ Nov. 2, 1830, the Duke of Wellington said : ' He was fully convinced the country possessed, at the present moment, a legislature which answered all the

Tipperary, and of Kincoe, co. Waterford. The Osborne family had settled in Ireland in 1558, and Richard

In future times, when merit's closely weigh'd,
And History scorns to borrow Flattery's aid,
Impartial justice, all thy glories o'er,
The warrior,* not the statesman, will deplore.
Write 'neath thy bust, 'In camps and battles school'd,
Worthy of office had he never ruled !' †
Alas ! no statesmen in the present age
Stamp their bold spirit on their country's page,
Postponing measures which they dare not flout,
Each yields at last to 'Pressure from without !'
As for the million, gain alone they prize,
And only wealth has merit in their eyes,
A race of traders, whom no mean contents,
They measure virtue by the Three per Cents. !
Mark ! mid the mob of members passing by,
How few emerge from mediocrity,
Though all are *talkers* and address the House,
From puzzling Ewart ‡ to plain-speaking Rous !
Of old, when Pitt and Fox harangu'd, the herd
Looked on, and voted, but ne'er spoke a word,
Now, every whipster on some theme dilates,
Whilst tired Twiss § records adjourn'd debates !
Laments the spread of knowledge more and more,
Which, from a harmless blockhead, makes a bore !

Ye Irish Bishops, sleev'd in purest lawn,
Unskill'd on Kings or Ministers to fawn ;

good purposes of legislation, and this to a *greater degree than any legislature ever enjoyed in any country whatever*. He was not only not prepared to bring forward any measure of Reform, but would say, as long as he held any station in the Government, he would feel it his duty to resist all such measures !'—*See Hansard's Debates*.

* May 2, 1827.—The Duke of Wellington said : 'Having raised myself to the head of my profession, I am not desirous of leaving it in order to be appointed head of a Government, a situation for which I am sensible I am not *qualified*. My Lords, I should be worse than mad if I had ever thought of such a thing.'—*Hansard's Debates*—*Vide Brougham's Opinion*, page 3, note 3.

† 'Dignus imperii, nisi imperasset !'

‡ This gentleman, no doubt, *means well*, and his meaning would be better understood did he speak less.

§ Horace Twiss, 'quantum mutatus ab illo,' formerly Under Secretary for the Colonies. He is now *elevated* from his seat on the Treasury Bench to one in the Speaker's Gallery, and writes the excellent digest of the Debates for the *Times* newspaper, and, like Canning, has reason to complain of *his old friends* !

LIFE OF RALPH BERNAL OSBORNE.

Osborne—a successful lawyer of Waterford—having acquired large estates, was made first baronet in 1629.¹

Meeting frequently at Lady Morgan's house in William Street, well known at that time as the resort of all the most brilliant men and women of the day, Bernal and Miss Osborne, after a short acquaintance, became engaged, and were married at St. George's, Hanover Square, in August 1844. Mr. Hume-Dick acted as bridegroom's best man, and Mr. Disraeli attended the wedding breakfast in Hereford Gardens, where he congratulated his friend on the event in a happy and appropriate speech. Before the ceremony Bernal had assumed the arms and surname of Osborne under sign manual, and for the future styled himself Ralph Osborne; but he was hereafter more commonly known to the world as Bernal Osborne.

Who, without flocks, an easy tithe ensure,
And guard with pious care each sinecure !
Tho' Peel, with glozing, lull your wealthy Church,
A time may come he'll leave it in the lurch !
Even now aspiring Rome buds green with hope,
See placid Pusey plotting for the Pope !
And Presbyterians, on your ruin bent,
Spread through the land the doctrines of dissent !
Accept this warning verse, which Canning sends,
Think on his fate, and never trust your friends !

¹ The following members of the Osborne family represented constituencies in the Irish Parliament :—Sir John Osborne, Bart., M.P. for co. Meath; F. Osborne, Esq., M.P. for Navan, 1692; Sir John Osborne, Bart., M.P. for Lismore and co. Waterford, 1717 and 1723; Sir William Osborne, Bart., M.P. for Dungarvan and co. Waterford, 1758 and 1782; Sir Thomas Osborne, Bart., M.P. for Carysfort.

CHAPTER VII.

PARLIAMENT, 1844-47.

EVENTS have now brought back Ralph Bernal to Ireland, with an Irish wife and an Irish estate. Newtown Anner is situated in the county Tipperary, within two miles of the town of Clonmel, which in Irish means the Vale of Honey. The Commeragh range of mountains, and large woodlands, give both beauty to the view and sport to the gun. The river Suir, well stocked with salmon and trout, ran through the property, while a good pack of foxhounds hunted the country. Thus Bernal Osborne's new home offered every means for the enjoyment of country life.

Local affairs soon engaged his attention. He became in turn High Sheriff of the county, Chairman of the Poor Law Union, and Foreman of the Grand Jury. His abilities were at once appreciated, and, though a Liberal in politics and outspoken in his views, he was always on the best of terms with the Tory gentry of Tipperary.

Whilst enjoying keenly the field sports of the district, Osborne found his chief occupation in the management of a 600-acre pasture farm, and used to boast that he had made agriculture a profitable business. The luxuriant grass and dry limestone soil enabled him successfully to indulge his hobby of

breeding and breaking horses. Many are the horse-dealing stories told of Captain Osborne, and often was he seen in Clonmel Fair using his excellent judgment in horseflesh, to pick out a promising young one for himself, or to execute the commission of a friend for an Irish hunter.

The management of his wife's Irish estate also claimed his attention, and he often described how the fee simple of the land was in many cases paid away in enabling the surplus population to emigrate to America, their recompense in after times being an occasional message, telling how well the members of the family were doing in the land of their adoption.

The years which followed Bernal Osborne's marriage were gloomy ones for Ireland. The accession to office by the Tories was the signal to O'Connell to revive the cry of Repeal, and between 1844 and 1847 Tipperary, in common with the rest of the country, was a scene of agitation, abject misery, and starvation, which finally culminated in the abortive insurrection of 1848. During this period Osborne took up a very independent line, as his published letters prove, and he was urgent in his appeals to the landowners of Ireland to combine in order to save themselves and their properties from the ruin he saw impending.

Parliament, however, still occupied his chief attention, and in the summer of 1845 Osborne spoke often and trenchantly upon Irish affairs, advocating the endowment of Maynooth and inveighing against the Irish Church Establishment. 'Never,' he cried, 'would the question of the grievances of Ireland be finally settled until they made the Established Church commensurate with its population, and not with its territorial wants.' He twitted the Prime Minister

with a great change of spirit, and thought 'they would have to call in those Custom-house officers, who were able to discriminate between "clayed" sugars, in order to detect any material difference between Sir R. Peel and Lord John Russell ;' while Mr. Spooner, the then prominent Evangelical champion, he dubbed a Birmingham Pope, so infallible did he claim to be in his reasoning.

It was during this year that the Queen's Colleges were founded for Ireland, and Sir Robert Inglis left the House declaring the Government proposal to be 'a gigantic scheme of godless education.' Not long afterwards Mr. Osborne moved for a return of all the revenues of Trinity College, Dublin, and, in the discussion which subsequently arose on the Colleges (Ireland) Bill, made a very amusing speech. He said 'it was enough to make Elizabeth shudder in her grave to hear of a body of married priests holding the fellowships in a College established by her ;' and he wound up by a parody of Sir Robert Inglis's phrase, declaring Trinity College to be merely 'a gigantic scheme of collegiate connubiality.' Long afterwards, Osborne's proposals were adopted, and now Dublin University is open to all denominations.

When the recess came, Osborne returned to Ireland.

Amongst his Parliamentary friends was Mr. Roebuck, a man of congenial temperament and of much the same political independence as himself. The following characteristic letter was in answer to an invitation to Newtown :—

Ashley Arnewood, Christchurch, Hants : Sept. 5, 1845.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—Your notions of business outstrip Hampshire performance most woefully ; 'your dull ass won't

mend his pace by beating,' and I find that I must learn to abide the inert and sluggish nature of these clodpates. One great evil, however, I cannot with all my philosophy put up with without giving vent to my rage. I shall be, I fear, deprived of the pleasure of meeting you this year in Paddy's land. My barns, my house-top, my rooms, walls, &c., &c., &c., are all in a process of change or creation. I have an outgoing tenant who is a saint, and therefore requires vigilant watching, as he desires to cheat me at every turn. In short, I am in the very turmoil of a new line of business—rural rows having succeeded by way of variety to Parliamentary strife.

But what is deferred is not put off for ever. I must see your land of praties, and get you to come and look at my new farm when it is in better order.

The weather is very much like Whig liberality—mighty fine to look at—but really cold and good for nothing; it is mere shine and nothing else.

Yours very sincerely,

J. A. ROEBUCK.

R. Osborne, Esq.

In the summer of 1846 Osborne took part in several important debates, never failing to attack the Government whenever opportunity served. O'Connell moved an amendment to the Protection of Life (Ireland) Bill. Osborne seconded it, deprecating the measure as 'calculated to inflame the complicated evils of Ireland.' In the course of a long and lively speech he alluded to Lord G. Bentinck in the following sporting phraseology: 'He did not lay much stress upon the noble lord's expression, for he had not had sufficient training as a leader to weigh sufficiently the importance of each phrase, and when he jumped from figures of rhetoric to figures of arithmetic the noble lord sometimes bolted from his backers and was apt to run in distress.' It was with sallies such as these that Osborne contrived

to gain the ready ear of the House. He knew what would attract attention, and thus was always listened to with expectation.

The day the Corn Laws passed the Lords, Peel and the Conservatives were turned out of office by a vote on the Coercion Bill. Lord John Russell succeeded to power, and the Liberal programme was soon before the House.

Osborne now proved himself to be as unsparing a critic of his own party as he had lately been of the Opposition. He denounced the Irish policy of Lord John Russell as nil; 'for the life of him he could not see what difference there was between Tweedledum and Tweedledee.' As for Lord John, he ought to have taken office under Peel. Drainage was the only thing on which the Cabinet was agreed. They were to be a set of Commissioners of Sewers.

Alluding to Peel's great speech on the Coercion Bill, Osborne showed that he could be generous and magnanimous to a political opponent. 'The gentleman,' he said, 'worst used in the whole business was Sir Robert Peel. He was always given to understand that the right hon. baronet was the great upholder of abuses, and that the noble lord (Lord John Russell) was to be looked to as his great opponent and rival. He had now found out his mistake; and he would say that the parting speech of the right hon. baronet, in which he had signified that he would no longer "give up to party what was meant for mankind," held out great hope for the future government of this country. He knew not whether Peel ever contemplated returning to office; power he had never quitted, but if he was prepared to carry out the principles indicated in that parting speech, he must at no remote

period be returned to office with the confidence and support of the middle classes of this country.'

For Ireland and Irish landlords 1846 was a terrible year—the first in which the potato disease appeared. The 'rot' set in with a suddenness and rapidity which left the people, who up to that lived exclusively on the root, helpless and without food. Meanwhile the landlords were in a precarious condition, owing to the Labour Rate Act, and, to add to their distress, were bitterly attacked by the English press. Osborne, seeing how affairs stood on his return to Ireland, at once sat down and wrote a caustic letter addressed to Lord John Russell, which appeared on September 28 in the *Morning Chronicle*.¹ It was a vivid and telling picture of Irish affairs, and provoked from the editor a leading article which endeavoured to answer the positions taken up by Lord Russell's correspondent. To this Osborne rejoined. Not content with thus giving publicity to his views on Irish affairs, he wrote and published three long and interesting letters—two 'To the Resident Proprietors of small Landed Estates in Ireland,' in which he advocated a great public meeting in Dublin to resist 'the subversion of landed property in Ireland,' and one called 'A Few Words to the Aristocracy, Gentry, and Tenant-farmers.' In the last he declared that 'the only hope of mitigating the calamity is for the aristocracy and gentry of Ireland to organize a national party.'²

Next session Osborne continued his attacks upon the Irish policy of the Liberal Government. He complained of 'bit-by-bit legislation,' and demanded a 'great and comprehensive measure for improving the social condition of the Irish people.' He compared

¹ See Appendix A.

² See Appendix B, C, D.

Lord John Russell's Labouring Poor Bill to an 'Act passed in the Irish Parliament for making fifty miles of turnpike road, and passed as a rider to a Tobacco Bill.' He declared that if the Lord-Lieutenant was to be of any use he ought to have a seat in the Cabinet, an expression of opinion which has been remarkably confirmed by recent events. Upon Lord G. Bentinck's Railway Bill for Ireland, which he warmly supported, Osborne made a very racy speech, and the support which Lord George received on this occasion from Osborne was not forgotten, as will be seen hereafter.¹

Thus passed the first seven years of Osborne's political life. He had quickly made the peculiar influence of his wit felt in the House of Commons, and by incessantly directing his attacks against the great men of the day he had drawn upon himself the attention of the outside public. In Ireland he had become a man of some note, and was in peculiarly

¹ 'The member for Mayo (Mr. D. Browne) had found it very difficult to give a sectarian and political turn to this question of Irish railways. . . . But he had connected—though very indistinctly—the construction of earth-works with the increase of the franchise, and had sought to persuade the House that the people who could be engaged in laying down sleepers would afterwards be occupied in rooting up the Catholic Church. He could not see the inference, nor could he admit that because Lord G. Bentinck had voted for Catholic Emancipation, therefore he would be disposed to convert a railway communication to any unorthodox purpose. There was no doubt that if the noble lord succeeded in carrying his bill, he would, when the lines were ready, offer premiums for Conservative stokers and breaksmen of improved Protestant principles. A similar sort of reasoning had been adopted on the occurrence of a similar calamity in this country. After the great fire of London, and when the whole of this vast metropolis was suffering from distress, the sympathising people of Ireland sent over a contribution of 20,000 fat cattle to support the once fat citizens of the capital city. But (the historian recorded the fact), so high did party feeling run in those days, and so prejudiced were the citizens, that though many of them were famishing, it was with the greatest difficulty they were brought to touch the steaks of such decidedly Popish bullocks.'—*Hansard*, vol. 90, p. 38.

good odour with the Liberal and Catholic element, so much so that he was urged to stand for the County Cork by several leading politicians in that country. Nor was he tabooed by the Conservatives in Ireland. Far from it indeed. He was a member of Kildare Street Club, and old *habitués* of that classic resort of Irish landlords well remember the round-table parties at the old house, when Lord Waterford, Lord Clanricarde, Lord Howth, Lord Westmeath, Sir Thomas Burke, Stephen O'Meagher, Captain George Vaughan, were all Bernal Osborne's intimate associates.

Nor was it the Conservatives' fault that Osborne did not commence his Irish electioneering experiences earlier in life, as the following letter proves :—

Morrison's Hotel, Dublin: July 25, 1847.

MY DEAR MR. OSBORNE,—The Conservative party, not intending to bring forward a candidate for Tipperary, feel that you have claims on them from the admirable stand you have made latterly in defence of the gentry of Ireland.

Lord Donoughmore and myself believe that the gentry of Tipperary would support you if you stand (eschewing Repeal of course).

The election will be as late as possible probably.

Mr. Bagwell will certainly go to the poll ; but with the Conservative forces aiding you, in the present state of the registry, &c., &c., we think you too could succeed.

I remain,

Very sincerely yours,

GLENGALL.

R. B. Osborne, Esq.

P.S.—You have plenty of time, for *our* party are quite prepared for battle.

But just at that time Osborne was on the eve of a much greater political leap. From Wycombe to Tipperary County would have been doubtless good

promotion, but there were still higher things in store for him, and accordingly he declined with thanks the proffered support of the Irish Conservatives.

In London, Bernal Osborne moved in literary as well as political society. His father had been an intimate friend of the Countess of Blessington, as well as a contributor to the fashionable periodical literature of which she was the originator. It was at Gore House, doubtless, that his son became acquainted with Count d'Orsay, by whose hand was executed a portrait of Bernal Osborne, uniform with the series of pencil sketches of public men by which the name of d'Orsay is connected with the art of the day.

With Lady Blessington Bernal Osborne corresponded occasionally. The following letter is interesting, as showing her opinion of Osborne's Irish policy as expressed in his public letters :¹—

Gore House: December 18, 1846.

MY DEAR MR. OSBORNE,—I thank you for your letter and the papers, both of which I perused with deep interest and regret, for the sad details contained in them. I duly appreciate the warmth of heart that leads you to espouse with such earnestness the cause of poor old Ireland. Would to God that her torpid sons felt her wrongs, and had the energy and talent to make them known and felt that you possess. It makes me ashamed to know that your example has not aroused them. Your letters in the papers must have had this effect, if one spark of patriotism lingered in their breasts. When one thinks that to two strangers, yourself and Mr. Bianconi, my poor country owes more than to all her own country gentlemen, one cannot help blushing for the supineness of Irishmen. I was much pleased to hear so good an account of you and yours from your brother. He gave me a charming description of your little girl, and likes Ireland notwithstanding its misery. For me, I think its misfortunes

¹ See Appendix.

render it dearer to me. Alfred is at Bretby, where he remains until Christmas Eve. Poor Edmunstone! His betrothed wife—a charming girl—is in despair. My nieces beg to be most kindly remembered to you, and I remain, my dear Mr. Osborne,

Sincerely yours,
M. BLESSINGTON.

Remember me to Mr. A. Ryall when you see him.

It may have been upon his return from Ireland after this letter that the incident occurred which gave rise to a well-known anecdote. Lady Blessington asked Osborne to bring her back a salmon from the river Suir, the river which runs through Clonmel and past the demesne of Newtown Anner. Forgetting his promise until he arrived in London, Osborne went off at once to Groves, the well-known Bond Street fishmonger, and gave directions that the finest salmon in the shop should be packed up and sent to Lady Blessington. At the same time he wrote a note, saying, as an excuse, that the salmon 'though late, was *sure*.' Groves, however, unfortunately sent not only the fish, but his card attached to it. Lady Blessington at once comprehended the situation, and with native wit, in acknowledging the offering, said that 'a salmon from the Groves of Bond Street would no doubt taste quite as good as a salmon from the Groves of Blarney.'

CHAPTER VIII.

MIDDLESEX.

IN 1847, the Parliament which had brought Osborne into public life came to an end. A general election sent each member of the House back to his constituency, and amongst them the member for Wycombe. On June 18, 1847, he addressed a large crowd from the top of a waggon in the market-place of Wycombe. The rain poured down in torrents, but, nothing daunted, Osborne spoke for two hours, supported by his good friends, Mr. Wheeler, the mayor of the borough, Mr. Henry Hull, of Uxbridge, Messrs. Lucas, Turner, and Shore.

He commenced by reminding the electors that his opponents, six years ago, could only find two faults with him—the first was that he was a fighting man by profession, although he had never fought anyone; and the second, that he had not a wife and was a young man. He had rectified both the errors. When he found that in sitting for the borough he could not give the votes he wished in consequence of being a soldier, he gave up his commission. He gave up the travelling title of Captain, and took that of plain Master. He was also free from the second charge, because he was now married. His name had changed certainly, but he assured the assembly it was the only thing that had changed about him since 1841.

Notwithstanding all his good deeds in Parliament and his pleasant speeches on the platform, Osborne was forced to retire from the contest. The borough electors had suffered too much during the interval to repeat their opposition to Lord Carrington, more especially as the new Abbey candidate, Mr. M. T. Smith, was an orthodox Liberal. But amongst his original friends in Wycombe was Mr. Henry Hull, a member of the Society of Friends, who had a warm admiration of Mr. Osborne's political principles and Parliamentary ability. It was he who first suggested to the somewhat despondent member for Wycombe that he should fly at higher game and contest Middlesex. Mr. Hull, who lived at Uxbridge, and wielded a wide political influence in that part of Middlesex, took immediate steps to broach the subject in the county, and the ultimate result of his action was the candidature of Bernal Osborne.¹

¹ His Address ran as follows :—

TO THE ENLIGHTENED AND INDEPENDENT ELECTORS
OF THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX.

GENTLEMEN,—Having received a requisition from a numerous and respectable body of the electors of the metropolitan county, calling on me to become a candidate for your suffrages at the ensuing election, I have the honour to inform you that I am prepared to comply with the wishes of the requisitionists, and thereby afford an opportunity to the electors of selecting a member whom they may consider most likely to advocate their interests, whilst representing their political sentiments.

The votes which I have given during six years' constant attendance in the House of Commons are the best assurances I can offer for my future conduct ; such votes have uniformly been for the advancement of popular privileges and the reduction of sinecures. I am opposed to the endowment of any religious bodies from the public purse, or the promotion of any particular religious opinions under the semblance of educational grants. A supporter of a repeal of the Corn Laws before that measure became fashionable among county members, I am prepared to urge an extension of the doctrines of Free Trade, by which the English farmer may be placed on a fair footing with his Continental competitor, being convinced, if the principles of Free Trade be carried to their legitimate conclusions, there can exist no such anomaly as an exclusive interest, but

This was no doubt a high compliment to so young a politician ; but Bernal Osborne had now made a distinct reputation for himself in the House of Commons as an independent man, with unusual powers of observation and criticism. Humour and the keen edge of ridicule have in every age led the van of all Radical movements. Osborne had begun life as an ironic satirist, and six years of practice before a difficult audience had made him a master of the art of public speaking. His pat allusions, happy phrases, and audacious personalities, together with an inimitable coolness of manner and immovability of countenance, had already secured for him the enviable position of being, what he was subsequently called by Disraeli, the 'chartered libertine of debate ;' and so it came to pass, when Osborne definitely determined to fight Middlesex,

that the welfare of the farmer, manufacturer, labourer, and artisan, is indissolubly united ; and what is for the benefit of one must conduce to the well-being of every class. Entertaining these views, I have given my best consideration to the oppressive nature of the malt tax, and the high duties enacted on tea and tobacco, each of which I am anxious if possible to remove.

Without making any professions of attachment to either of the great political parties, who in past struggles for ascendancy have too often neglected the essential interests of the people, in the event of my being chosen as your representative I should consider it my duty to regard the inherent value of the measures proposed, rather than the relative position of the authors ; and, proffering a general support to a Liberal Administration, I should reserve to myself the right of acting as an unbiassed member of the legislature.

I shall be ready to give any further explanations of my views on the various political questions, which it would be tedious to enumerate in an Address, at those public meetings which it will be my anxiety to attend. Meanwhile, I call upon those electors of Middlesex who are hostile alike to avowed coalitions or covert compromises to give their support and record their votes in favour of a candidate who, in asserting his own, seeks to vindicate their independence.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your faithful servant,

Reform Club, July 24, 1847.

RALPH OSBORNE.

it was conceded on all sides that in sporting phrase 'he was a bad one to beat.'

For some years the Middlesex representation had been divided between the two parties. In 1841 Colonel Thomas Wood had wrested the seat from Mr. Joseph Hume, one of the best and oldest Reformers of the day, on a strictly Protectionist programme, and he now sought re-election after having broken his pledges and voted for Free Trade. Lord Robert Grosvenor also sought re-election as a Whig, but his return was always secure; the contest from the first lying between Colonel Wood and the new candidate. At the very outset of his canvass Osborne received unexpected support from the Conservative Protectionist party. Lord George Bentinck wrote to him as follows:—

Harcourt House : August 2, 1847.

DEAR BERNAL OSBORNE,—As a Protectionist I cannot pretend that I concur in your politics, who are a Free Trader, but I do think the metropolitan county ought to feel much indebted to you for coming forward to rescue it from the disgrace of tamely and basely submitting to have its representation continued in the hands of a gentleman who asked it on one ground, and, having obtained it, used it for the destruction of the very interest he feigned his desire to support.

As leader of the Protectionists in the House of Commons, I especially feel that, failing a Protectionist candidate of our own, we are greatly indebted to you for coming to rescue us from the hateful bondage of a representative who has so betrayed us; and whilst there is no candidate with whose politics I can entirely agree, I feel that not only Ireland, but England as well as I individually, have reason to feel indebted singly to you of all the three candidates in the field for the gallant way in which you supported the Irish railway scheme for giving full and profitable employment to Irish people at *no cost to this country*.

I may say this now without fear of contradiction, since,

better late than never, the repentant Chancellor of the Exchequer in the last fortnight of the session has come frankly and honestly forward *to make confession before the country* that of all the *nine millions three hundred thousand pounds sterling* to be granted and loaned for the relief of Ireland, the 620,000*l.* advanced for the construction of Irish railroads is the only sum of which *the interest and the principal will be repaid with a certainty to England!*

Under these circumstances I am moved to subscribe 100*l.*, which I inclose, towards the expenses of your election, not against Lord Robert Grosvenor, but in the hope that through your instrumentality another example may be made of a renegade Protectionist, and another proof given that good faith with the people of England cannot be perfidiously broken with impunity.

Very faithfully yours,

G. BENTINCK.

Pleasant as such a communication must have been, Osborne could obviously not accept the proffered pecuniary support, and he accordingly declined in the following terms :—

MIDDLESEX ELECTION, 1847.

Mr. Osborne's Central Committee Room, 27 Regent Street :

August 3, 1847.

MY DEAR LORD GEORGE,—I beg to acknowledge your kind letter of yesterday, together with its inclosure of a cheque for *one hundred* pounds as your subscription towards defraying my election expenses in the ensuing contest for Middlesex. I fully appreciate the sincerity and frankness of your public character, as the distinguished leader of the Protectionist party, and am flattered by the interest you have exhibited in my success; but whilst I accept your good wishes in my behalf (each of us retaining our own independent political opinions), I am sure you will not misinterpret my motives in re-inclosing your subscription when I assure you of my deep sense of the handsome manner in which you have conveyed the same.

I am, my dear Lord George, very faithfully yours,

RALPH OSBORNE.

The Lord George Bentinck, M.P., Harcourt House.

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Thus Osborne was sure of the support of the Protectionist party. From the first, however, he was a most popular candidate amongst the Radicals. The Whig leaders only decided on the eve of the contest to give unqualified support to his candidature, and thus at the eleventh hour those Liberals who would have been content with the compromise of a divided constituency were disappointed.¹

The reception which Osborne met at his opening meeting at Hounslow was most encouraging. In his first political statement he declared himself opposed to any State Church endowment which bolstered up a particular sect. He was for the extension of the franchise, and was no 'finality-monger' like Colonel Wood. He had a good six years' character from his last place, and if he was asked why he left it he would tell them: a certain duke once dubbed the 'farmers' friend' made his last place too expensive to keep, made the price of 'mutton' too high, and the cost of 'bird-cages, canaries,' and so forth, so exorbitant that his purse was unequal to the extravagance of the place. About three weeks ago he was induced to seek another and a better place in Middlesex, but he did not do so until Mr. Hume and other heads of the Liberal party had declined seeking the situation, and urged him to apply for it at the hands of the electors. There was absolutely the difficulty in the affair of 'first catch your

¹ The *Daily News*, August 2, 1847, said:—'Mr. Bernal Osborne is, as we need hardly say to such of our readers as have watched his Parliamentary career, a man well worthy of the honour to which he aspires. There cannot be two opinions as to the very marked ability and vigour which he habitually brings to the advocacy of broad principles of civil, religious, and commercial freedom. . . . It was not until the refusal of his political seniors in the Liberal party made it quite clear that the county was going to be given away that he consented to take the sense of the electors on this not very creditable compact.'

candidate.' Mr. Hume preferring to return to the quiet repose of Montrose, he found it was necessary to throw himself into the breach. They had been told he was not a 'proper man.' If a proper man meant one with 50,000*l.* a year, he was not a proper man. But if it meant one unconnected and uninfluenced by the aristocracy, if it meant a man of thorough independence, if it meant a man zealous in the cause of the people and one of them, and active in the cause of ameliorating progress, he trusted he might say of himself, 'I am a proper man.'

This was the key-note of Osborne's canvass, and it proved highly successful. The nomination took place on August 4. Sir William Molesworth proposed, and Mr. Henry Hull seconded him, at the hustings, where he supplemented his first political utterances with the following remarks :—

My hon. friend Mr. George Thompson has reminded me of a question which he perceived on a placard on the walls as he came down here, and I shall answer that question. The question is, 'Who is Mr. Osborne?' I hope, gentlemen, you will answer that question in the way in which a similar question has been answered in the Tower Hamlets, where 'Who is Mr. George Thompson?' has become now a proverb. Before I tell you who Mr. Osborne is, I will tell you what he is not. Mr. Osborne is *not* a man who will seek your suffrages without considering well the political opinions he puts before you, and if he should think fit from conviction to change his mind on the points on which he seeks for your support, he will, should he be returned by you to Parliament, resign his seat into your hands. Mr. Osborne is a man who will give his best support to the working classes, not by any of the romantic allusions that have been made to-day, but by giving to those working classes an interest in returning members to Parliament. Mr. Osborne is a man who will not lean on the popular clap-

trap of calling the ballot an 'un-English' system. I ask those hon. gentlemen if bribery and corruption are to be reckoned amongst the blessings of the English Constitution? Gentlemen, if these sentiments are revolutionary, I am a revolutionist, but I am one who holds that I am really a Conservative. I believe those are really Conservative who are prepared to advance with the spirit of the times to remove the deformities of the Constitution, and are anxious to lead in the onward course, not doing so for the love of change, but in order to go with the spirit of the times, and to admit every portion of the people of this great country into the wide portals of the British Constitution. These are the sentiments which I had to lay before you, and you have listened to me with an attention which my merits do not demand; but I trust when you take into consideration the grievances of the case, you will excuse the humbleness of the advocate. I hope you will not be inclined to throw away the instrument, because, however humble, it is placed before you to open the great county of Middlesex.

There was the usual amount of public speaking during the election, in which Osborne took his full share. One of Colonel Wood's supporters was a Mr. Paynter, who had brought out a placard in which the following passage occurs:— 'Mr. Osborne has avowed that he is for the vote by ballot, extension of the suffrage, and secular education. If such opinions prevail in Parliament, the glory of England is set, the institutions of the monarchy endangered, and an axe laid at the foundation of the Established Church.' Osborne, ever quick at reply, seized upon the passage and played upon it with effect. 'Mr. Paynter,' he said, 'had flourished the axe largely on the day of nomination, representing him as a political butcher ready to knock down anything. The Tories had a fancy when their own seat was in danger that the Church was in danger

too ; those men who were no particular supporters of the Church on other occasions took a sort of septennial Church fit. There were some lines of Thomas Hood which were applicable to such cases :—

A man may cry "Church, Church," at every word,
With no more piety than other people.
The daw's not reckoned a religious bird
Because it keeps caw-cawing from the steeple.

If Colonel Wood were a wise man,' he continued, ' which there was some reason to doubt, he would cut *the painter*, and embark on the sea of common sense.' In conclusion, he declared he had no ambition to be at the head of the poll, where Lord Robert Grosvenor's public character and long-tried consistency entitled him to be placed ; but he hoped to keep Colonel Wood at a very respectful distance. He had been so strongly accused of a desire to lay the axe at the root of existing institutions, that he had merely to say the only application he proposed for it at the moment was to lay it at the root of diseased timber, and to cut down the rotten 'Wood' in the county of Middlesex.

The result of the election was as follows :—

Lord R. Grosvenor	.	.	4,944
Ralph Osborne	.	.	4,175
Colonel Wood	.	.	3,450

The first to write his congratulations was Mr. Hume :—

Brixham Castle : August 13, 1847.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—I saw last night your return, which gave me much satisfaction. .

I had little doubt of the result from the first, but I did not expect that Colonel Wood would have polled so many. The county of Middlesex is now, as it ought to be, a *Radical* and a *Whig*, and thus I trust it will continue.

I have had much trouble from an opposition at the nomination by a combination of Navigation Laws men, of Tories and bigots, though there never was the smallest risk of the election.

The mass of the people sound, and the proceedings quite satisfactory, but I have been detained eight or nine days most unnecessarily.

My opponent, a man possessing the same political principles, but shirking the Navigation Laws and the Sabbath travelling, which some of the Free Kirk object to.

I hope to find you fresh after your victory, and I offer a suggestion to you to *form a Committee in each district whilst the success is fresh to attend to the Register and fortify yourself against any sudden dissolution* or change of measures.

I have to-day a public meeting to dine at in Montrose, and shall get to the South immediately.

Believe me, yours sincerely,

JOSEPH HUME.

Thus, amid the congratulations of many friends, Bernal Osborne returned to the House of Commons as the representative of one of the most important constituencies in the kingdom. He was henceforward to be looked upon as one of the rising men of the day, and he lost no time in assuring his position amongst the most advanced Radicals in the House.

CHAPTER IX.

OPINIONS ON IRISH AFFAIRS, 1847-50.

FROM 1847 to 1850 Ireland was the chief political difficulty of the day. It has already been seen that Osborne had formed strong and advanced opinions as to the necessities of that country, and from the first days of Lord John Russell's Ministry he strenuously and persistently opposed the Irish policy of the Whig Government. When Mr. Sharman Crawford, in 1847, brought in a bill to extend the Ulster tenant-right to the rest of Ireland, Osborne moved its rejection. He did not believe in any legislation for Ireland short of a drastic measure dealing with the entire system of real property. In the same way he opposed the Government landlord and tenant measure, which Sir William Somerville brought forward in 1848. He declared that 'a measure more calculated to involve Ireland in the meshes of the law, more calculated to create discontent amongst the landlords and tenants, had never been introduced by her Majesty's Government. What was required in Ireland was a measure to facilitate free sale in the article of land. The Government should bring in a bill to allow entailed estates to be sold, and to give security to titles. What was wanted in Ireland was not so much political reform as social regeneration, and unless the Government was

prepared to bring in a bill to "loosen" the land, all their present measures would be labour in vain.'

Again, in the debate upon the erection of the Encumbered Estates' Court, Bernal Osborne alluded to the land system on the Continent, and again advocated the abolition of all entails of Irish property.

'No grant of landed property,' he said, 'no loan of money, no artificial stimulant to create labour for Ireland would be of any use, whilst you had the law of real property in the state in which it was. If you meant sincerely to eradicate crime, you must go a long way in destroying the law of property in Ireland, and it was the bounden duty of the House to adopt such a measure as would create a race of small proprietors in Ireland; it would increase the cereal produce.'

In those days such opinions were considered revolutionary. They have been popularized of late years by speeches of Mr. Bright and the writings of the late Mr. Joseph Kay, Q.C., and the cry of 'free land' is now within the sphere of practical politics. Over and over again in Irish debates between 1847 and 1850 Osborne reiterated these views on land legislation. He attacked Lord John Russell persistently on this point. 'Radical measures,' he cried scornfully, when the Relief of Distress Bill was brought in, in February 1849—'they are a sort of political Mrs. Harris: no man had yet ever seen them.' He advised the House to retrace its steps, or by its bad legislation Ireland would continue to fall from bad to worse until at length it realized the description of the historian, and would be a 'land with no arts, no letters, no society, and the life of man nasty, brutish, and short.'

Next month he again opposed the Government on

the system of doles in which Lord John Russell (whom he described as Dr. Sangrado) was persisting. The landlords, he said, were not to blame. They were suffering from the faults of others. What was wanted was 'a system of home colonization or assisted emigration.' The Poor Law he denounced as a system of 'legalised communism.' He himself had farmed on a small scale, and in 1848 had paid 1,000*l.* of poor rate and was obliged to discharge his labourers. The system of receivers in Chancery he declared to be scandalous, and in a subsequent speech he raised the whole question of land under the control of the Court of Chancery.

Such were the views which Bernal Osborne's experience dictated for the solution of the land question. They were treated as impossible by the statesmen of his own times. To-day they are matters of serious consideration amongst politicians.

It was, however, on the subject of the Irish Church that Bernal Osborne was considered an authority. He had studied the question in all its branches. Amongst his papers are piles of notes upon the history and working of the Irish Church Establishment, showing that he had read widely and spared no pains to gain information. He made the question the vehicle of a bitter attack upon the Whig Government in the session of 1849. His speech on this occasion¹ was the first of a series which brought his name prominently before the public and the House of Commons. His theory on the Irish Church was, not to see it abolished, but to have the congregational and not the territorial plan adopted. This would necessitate a reduction of the Church Establishment. Osborne

¹ See Hansard, vol. cvii.

endeavoured to prove his case out of the mouths of Cabinet Ministers and their Irish subordinates (who now refused to touch the question), and it certainly was a most damaging exposure of political inconsistency.

‘The Cabinet,’ he said, ‘was composed of gentlemen who from 1823 to 1845 had expressed their belief that the Irish Church was the root of all the discontent in Ireland, and who supported their opinions by votes. This question, which was formerly the slogan of the present Ministerial opposition, which was formerly the war cry of the Whigs, and that instrument upon which so many harmonious notes had been struck to call the Whig supporters together, was now, like the fabulous harp of Tara, hanging up mute and unstrung. It would not be his fault if he did not wake the memory of Ministers and the country.’

There was indeed no answer to be made to Osborne’s indictment, and only a very feeble attempt was made to turn it aside. In his reply, with ironic emphasis Osborne said he saw no reason to regret the tone of debate or its upshot. He could not help thinking he was present at a very melancholy occasion. ‘We are present to witness the decease of another Whig principle. The right hon. baronet the Secretary for the Home Department acts as chief mourner and sings the funeral dirge, and he is followed by all the hon. gentlemen who from 1832 to 1845 voted in its favour, and who now bring up the *cortège* as mourners for its fate.’

In the course of this speech Osborne told two stories which were never forgotten or forgiven him in Irish Protestant circles. The first he read from a private letter, and it described a parish in the county

Waterford where there was no church, no resident clergyman, and the rector had sold the tithes. 'They were now paid,' the letter said, 'which I am glad of, to a very fine girl.' The second anecdote told how in a certain parish there was a church and only one Protestant family. 'I understood,' said Osborne, with immovable countenance, 'that the late rector, when he went by chance to preach there, the family being at home, found a goose hatching her eggs in the pulpit.'

In after years, when he canvassed the city of Waterford, the answer of many Protestant voters was, 'Ah! how about that goose?'

Except directly after Smith O'Brien's outbreak on July 20, 1848, Osborne consistently spoke and voted against the policy of Coercion Acts for Ireland. On that occasion he made a remarkable statement. He said that on a future occasion 'I propose to submit to the House my long-considered convictions, that there should be some modification of the Act of Union; but I would sooner lose my life in placing myself on the side of order than co-operate with those demagogues who only point to pillage in order that they may enrich themselves.'

On May 17, 1850, Lord John Russell obtained leave to bring in a bill for the abolition of the Viceroyalty of Ireland. This was a subject on which Osborne had long made up his mind, and on which he was peculiarly qualified to speak from his past experiences as aide-de-camp to Lord Normanby.

He did not support the bill, he said, from any love of political uniformity, for he believed that the greatest mischief had arisen from attempting to engraft English institutions upon Irish habits. So far from thinking that the office was a proof of nationality, or that there was

any sentiment of national pride connected with it, he considered it as great a paradox in government as in nature that the shadow should remain where the substance had departed; that the Viceroyalty of Ireland should flourish when the Irish Parliament had ceased to exist. He regarded the existence of the Lord-Lieutenant as a proof of national serfdom, and knew of no other office which tended so much to demoralize Ireland and weaken England. The Government of Ireland was a perfect anomaly. Sometimes the Lord-Lieutenant controlled the Chief Secretary. Sometimes the Chief Secretary controlled the Lord-Lieutenant. Sometimes the Under Secretary controlled both; and there was that mysterious personage, who was termed the Law Adviser of the Castle, who occasionally pulled the string of the *fantoccini* of the Castle when they were called into action.¹

He concluded by demanding a revision of the Poor Law, Church reform, and a regular royal residence; nor had he any objection to the Imperial Parliament sitting occasionally in Dublin.

The following letter, written by Bernal Osborne from Ireland to his friend Mr. Gregory, at that time member for Dublin City, gives his impressions on Irish parties as they then stood, as well as an interesting picture of the state of the country:—

Newtown Anner, Clonmel: March 18, 1847.

MY DEAR GREGORY,—The work of confiscation appears to go briskly on, and the Hales *et hoc genus omne* unite with the Minister in kicking the landlords when they are down. Our King Street companions² would seem by the papers to have ‘faded and gone.’ The Irish party is, in fact, I sup-

¹ See *Hansard*, vol. cxi.

² A number of M.P.’s used to meet in King Street, Westminster, to discuss Irish affairs.

pose, defunct. Would you say it is impossible to form or reconstruct another on its ruins? To do this with any effect it would be necessary to take more of the popular element into combination ; and I can assure you some people of influence, hitherto Conservatives in their general opinions, are turning over the construction of such a party in their minds. Of course old prejudices and opinions must in some sort be sacrificed, if any real party is to be formed ; but I really think the time has come when, if the gentry do not attempt to lead public opinion in this country, they had better emigrate in a body, and leave the democracy to settle the business in their own fashion. I am not in a position to enter fully on this subject further than that I think you will see the resolution of the Grand Jury of Limerick will be responded to by many men of property and station.

As Lord John is determined on his intended Poor Law, I regret no member of the House connected with the land has proposed a national rate or charge in support of the poor, and of property real and personal, for I am convinced it will be impossible to carry out the bill with such a rating—that is to say, if the able-bodied destitute are to be supported by a Poor Law alone, with no other large scheme for absorbing the surplus labour. I am sorry circumstances will prevent me from trying the temper of the House on this head, as I conclude the bill will have passed through it by the 25th inst.

Before I conclude, I wish to draw your attention to the state of things about to occur in Ireland, and the consequences which will inevitably follow the breaking up of the Labour Poor Rate Act. At this moment large gangs of labourers are discharged, and as it is impossible the farmers can employ one-tenth of the number who have been working on the roads, and no soup shops will be in operation for two or three weeks to come, what may not happen in the interregnum? For my own part, I anticipate all sorts of horrors in the shape of murders and robberies ; in fact, I know large gangs of men are scouring the country at night well armed. Five ruffians shot a pay clerk and policeman two days back, about ten miles from this. Indeed, the language used respecting the

Irish gentlemen in particular has done much to set the poor against the rich, and a social war might break out at any moment. A hint from the altar of any chapel would set Ireland in a flame. Luckily the priests as a body are behaving very well, but the people are so demoralized by the Government measures, they will not pass from the labour rate to the soup-shop system, and from the soup-shop system to out-door relief, without making a greater stir than is anticipated.

Truly yours,

R. OSBORNE.

Bernal Osborne used to tell an incident illustrative of the condition of Tipperary at this time, which must have taken place almost immediately after the above letter was written. Whilst out walking one day near Newtown Anner, he met a large crowd of excited men, who told him they were on their way to burn a mill close by. 'Don't do that,' said Osborne, 'If you come up to the house, I will give you all there is to eat there.' They did so, and finally dispersed home.

Osborne corresponded during the anxious period of 1848 with Cobden and Roebuck, both of whom he pressed to visit him at Newtown Anner. Neither were able to do so. Roebuck wrote :—

August 16, 1848.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—I dare not think of any holiday while things here are in their present condition. Thanks, many and sincere, for your hospitable intents. . . . The grand evil of Ireland is the same which has plagued every country which has been appended, and not incorporated with a greater people. The gentry have always smarted with a feeling of inferiority. They have thus fancied that they had an interest in exciting the people, and to excite them they have seized upon the reigning current prejudices of the vulgar. Smith O'Brien, for example, was wounded by his utter failure in the House of Commons. An Englishman in like circumstances would probably have called the House a set of asses, and would also have been quiet and resigned to his fate, fancying,

if he were a fool, that the fault was in the House—if a wise man, in himself. But Smith O'Brien immediately attributed his failure to his being an Irishman ; goes over to Conciliation Hall, and is there, for obvious reasons, made much of. . . . Now my scheme is to throw Ireland upon her own resources, to give them municipal government, do away with all religious distinctions, to create equal political rights, withdraw the army, abolish the Viceregal Court, let the country maintain its own police, give to Ireland the whole of its judicial procedure, bringing nothing to the House of Lords by way of appeal, but strictly maintaining *Imperial* dominion. I would tax them, and make them pay to the Imperial Treasury. I would make all the general laws at once, and without naming Ireland, extend there, and I would do more. The immediate consequence of this would be to divide the Irish into two classes—those having something to lose, and those having nothing. In all ages and countries, the first class have always been predominant. Unsupported by our army, all the shopkeepers who now talk treason in safety would at once learn that such language would bring the plunderers into their houses. The gentry would be up and active. The priests would fear a lawless mob, and you would find a host of peaceful, peace-erecting elements at work which now lie idle, or which are transformed into incitement to lawlessness and rapine.

I was much amused by your speech *ad homines* ; but you must take a graver tone and a more exalted position, a larger and more imperial view. Excuse this long homily, and believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

J. A. ROEBUCK.

Two letters from Cobden on Irish matters are just now of particular interest :—

Hayling Island, Hants : October 21, 1848.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—I have been staying here with my wife and children ever since the close of the session. It is quite out of the civilized world, five miles from a shop or a doctor, and not a politician within a long day's walk, so that I am very quiet and comfortable—a sort of Robinson Crusoe

en famille. I have not lost sight of your friendly invitation, and have frequently thought of a trip to Ireland rather as a duty, I must confess, than as a matter of choice and pleasure. But whether I shall muster courage to put myself into a steamboat to cross the sea in order to find myself in the midst of your stormy political passions, is still a question which I begin to think will be decided in the negative. I have lately had some letters from my friend George Combe (the author of phrenological works), who has been staying in Ireland, and who has since been publishing some interesting correspondence upon the country in the *Edinburgh Scotsman*. He seems to be of opinion that the misgovernment and embroilment of the people have turned their brains, and actually driven them to insanity. Whether mad or not, it seems a case for the Executive to grapple with, for, until a Government will stand or fall by some bold measure for Ireland, nothing will be done. Has Lord Clarendon the necessary talent for *originating* a plan? He is better situated than any other man for being called in some day as Prime Minister to try his hand. I have a liking for the man, but hitherto he has not *done* what was expected from him. I do not give him any credit for the suppression of the rebellion, for there never were as many rebels in Smith O'Brien's ranks as policemen, to say nothing of soldiers. But I should like to know what he would propose as a cure for the disease, besides a strait-waistcoat. I suppose he will tell us something about it next session, which I hope will not begin before February.

Believe me, truly yours,

RICHARD COBDEN.

London : November 22, 1848.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—Your letter was lying for some weeks for me at the Reform Club, a place to which I seldom go even during the session, and scarcely ever in the recess. In my former letter to you I expressed great doubts about coming over to Ireland, and now I am decided not to cross the Channel during this winter. I do not give up the idea of paying you a visit, as a matter of duty as a public man, at some future time. It is only from a sense of duty that I

would ever penetrate into the south or west of Ireland again. I observe what you say about Lord Clarendon. He has yet to furnish a satisfactory answer to Napoleon's test of a great man, 'What has he done?' He has always appeared to me to be one of the luckiest of men, for during the last ten years all parties have united in praising him without exactly knowing why. Follow him where you will, in Paris, London, or Madrid, and you find he leaves a good odour after him. Even in Dublin he seems to blunt the fangs and dilute the poison of faction. But what does he propose to do? Hitherto there has been small merit in silencing the rebels: forty thousand bayonets against a few score of brainless braggarts are too great odds to confer much glory on the victor. After all, is there any remedy for Ireland and Irishmen? I sometimes almost doubt it. Most certainly I never heard of one from your side of the water that appeared to me to be likely to be successful. Nor can I regard the project of taking the Queen to Dublin for part of the year as at all likely to redeem your character for practical statesmanship. What good would the visit of a few lords and ladies of the bedchamber and other flunkies do to the ragged, starving, houseless wretch in Clare or Tipperary? A few more Quakers or cotton-spinners would do you far more good. Is there no possibility of getting *three* Irish M.P.s to agree upon something that ought to be done in the next session? Or are we to see chaos again presiding over the councils of the members for Ireland. If anything could stimulate men to try to do something in a legitimate way in the House of Commons, it is the ignominious plight in which the Irish people is presented to the world after Smith O'Brien's abortive attempt at revolution. Everybody here is ever looking with interest at the game which is being played upon the political chess-board in Prussia. I expect to see the King checked by the pawns, and probably paying a visit to his brother *Exs* at Mivart's Hotel. I hope your lady and her little one are well, and believe me,

Yours faithfully,

RICHARD COBDEN.

A letter from an Irishman of note—Valentine

H

second Lord Cloncurry—to Osborne is also interesting as showing the more advanced opinions of the day on Irish land.

Maretime : September 27.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—I write to thank you very much for your kindness to poor Cecil. I think if he lives he will be an honest and useful member.

The few words you say in favour of the Irish landlords are quite true. Whatever is bad in landlord or tenant arises from the circumstances in which they are placed, not from any innate depravity. If all lettings of land were to take place in open court it would tend much to prevent all misconceptions and jealousy between persons who should be firm friends. There, in the face of the world, both parties would be on their good behaviour, and ashamed to take an unfair advantage.

The nobleman could not give a twenty-one years' lease, having only seven or eight himself ; neither could any tenant, agreeing to a new valuation, claim back his agreement and impose on an unsuspecting person.

One of the chief complaints and best founded of northern landlords is, that when they let a comfortable farm at a moderate rent it is immediately subdivided, and part let at double rent, to the injury of the land and all parties interested. In the Court of Quarter Sessions, or some other if found necessary, the parties might agree as to the buildings, drainings, and improvements to be made, and the proportion to be paid by each. The whole might then be registered by the Clerk of the Peace or some other officer, and all after disputes prevented. And if neither landlord nor tenant had the money necessary to put the farm in proper order, they might agree in court—the one to take so much less rent, say a shilling an acre ; the other to pay so much more, say sixpence per acre, and that to be made a first lien on the land at twenty years' purchase. There is not a Jew who would not lend the money when the land gave such security. As to the present scheme of making useless roads, it is not a bit better than Castle-reagh's plan of making and filling holes ; but if the bogs be

reclaimed it will create new territory, which will prevent future famine, and repay the outlay in the course of four or five years. Thus a great evil would eventuate in a permanent benefit. No public work should be attempted but a remunerative one, and one that would give food as well as employment and the cultivation of waste land. The lowering of rivers and lakes and the building of fishing stations will alone do that.

As one of the trustees for distribution of the Indian relief food, I receive the most heartrending accounts of the sufferings of the people in this land of plenty, and the sum of twelve or thirteen thousand pounds we have distributed is a drop in the ocean.

How cheap and how natural a source of relief would be the stoppage of the distilleries compared to the complicated machinery of importing, exporting, distributing, and paying all kinds of commissaries and jobbers! With best respects to your lady,

Yours most truly,

CLONCURRY.

We have now explained Bernal Osborne's main views upon Irish politics. He displayed unusual sagacity in pointing out the central difficulties of the land system and the Irish Church Establishment. It is now certain that had these two questions been settled upon some broad and comprehensive basis, such as Osborne continually pressed upon the Government of the day, the Irish problem would never have reached its present insoluble position. It is, therefore, only just to have devoted some space to the subject. To have been wise before the event is a quality worth proving.

CHAPTER X.

RADICALS AND WHIGS, 1848-50.

WHEN Parliament met in 1848 English parties were disorganized and disintegrated. The Tories were divided into Peelites and Protectionists; while the advanced Radical wing of the Liberal party, headed by the veteran Mr. Joseph Hume, was almost as much opposed to the Whig administration of Lord John Russell as Mr. Disraeli and the Protectionists had been to Sir Robert Peel's Government. Mr. Hume had introduced Bernal Osborne into public life, and had shown him much kindness throughout his political career. Osborne returned this mark of friendship with characteristic warmth. No man, indeed, ever was more true and steady to those who once gained his affections, and accordingly it is not surprising that Osborne threw himself heart and soul into a movement to which he was attracted both by personal and political reasons. Towards the end of February Osborne received a letter from Mr. Roebuck, the text of which gives the key to the political manœuvres of the Radical party between 1848 and 1852. It ran as follows :—

Milton, Lymington : February 22, 1848.

MY DEAR OSBORNE, - Being in a scribbling humour, I have inflicted epistles upon sundry good men in the hope (vain, I

fear) of arousing them to the same pitch of fury as that to which I have myself arrived. The object of all this very useful imagination is Lord John Russell and his war speech and infernal Budget. The result of my anger is to find vent in the shape of a public metropolitan meeting. I want a great demonstration against idle menaces of war, of lavish and criminal, because lavish, expenditure, against all unworthy shams, and particularly against Lord John's sham fear of war. I have written to Cobden, Molesworth, Hume, and now to yourself. I have proposed a grand metropolitan meeting, yourself, as M.P. for Middlesex, in the chair. To Cobden I have suggested that he should take the lead and pluck up courage to assume the proper results of his position and not to dread the Whig aristocratic sneers against him as a low man (I have not used the word, though I have plainly marked the thing), to vindicate his right to lead, and at once to form a party. I have suggested that the way to form this party indoors is by beginning to make a stir outside, and that this now proposed meeting might be made the first step to this bond of union. This country is ridden by a rickety demon of aristocracy. Lords, no matter of what intellectual calibre, are foisted on the country, and we have sucking legislators and statesmen trained eventually to be brought to that high eminence of excellence to which C—— W—— and G—— G—— have arrived. Lords E—— and S—— for example, are looking up and striving to emulate these glorious samples of greatness. They are admitted to the Government as subs, and if to-morrow an offer were made to Cobden, he would be expected to place himself in this same subordinate station. I have done my best to make Cobden feel that this sort of thing is an insult on the part of the Whigs, and the result of his own improper hanging back. Were he not humble, they would not dare to be insolent. What I want of you all is to make the House and the country accustomed to hear complaints of this species of insolence. I want you to make a party, to hold together, to form a real Opposition (you have no such thing now), and steadily to work out the great ends of an Opposition, by starting upon a principle, and making the triumph of that principle the result of your own success.

Now you, I believe, feel as I do upon this matter. I have, I know, been thought mad with vanity, because I have always said I felt that I was quite as capable of filling any office in the State (the Chancellorship excepted) as any person by whom in my time they have been filled ; and I have been deemed an anarchist and foolish enthusiast when I have complained of the mode in which the stripling aristocrats have been made to exclude the really valuable and experienced men whom the country sends to Parliament. Fancy — Chancellor of the Exchequer and Hume and Cobden excluded. Hume has done more good than any man in our time, though he is not a speaker, and produces no effect upon our House of Commons. You have a capital opportunity. The people do not like this war cry and war taxes. The Tories are afraid to oust Lord John, because they would be putting in Peel, but we need not have any such fears. Do, therefore, I pray you, stir up our friends ; get up a grand demonstration, and let us make as great a row as possible. Tell me what you think of this.

Yours very truly,

J. A. ROEBUCK.

Mr. Roebuck's suggestion was not accomplished, but, though the meeting was never held, the anti-Russell crusade which he preached was carried on with vigour. Osborne was during the next four years unceasing in his attacks upon the Whigs. In the debate on the Budget in 1848 he inveighed against the proposal of an increased income tax, declaring he would vote against any augmentation of taxes. During the debate upon the Navy Estimates, Mr. Ward, Secretary to the Admiralty, made a long and tedious speech. The House was in a listless humour, and directly Mr. Ward sat down Osborne sprang suddenly to his feet, and raising both arms above his head, shouted in his loudest tones, 'I entreat the House not to be carried away by the eloquence of the right hon. gentleman.' The effect was so well calculated that the whole House

roared with laughter, and Osborne proceeded with his remarks.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (he said) spoke of the small increase of the Estimates, very much like the apology of the lady who was accused of rather an unfortunate increase to her family, the unwelcome stranger was—'a very little one.' He hoped the House would not be misled by the dubious support of the right hon. baronet (Peel) who had lately taken upon himself the new character of an officer of the Humane Society. Directly he saw the Ministry drop into a dangerous hole, he produced his drag and restored them to a safe footing on *terra firma*. . . . The determination of the country was that they would have a cheaper Government. He thought the noble lord would do well to take a note of the events which were passing around him. When the ties of Europe were being dissolved one after the other, and the prevention of a dinner involved the destruction of a dynasty, this was not the moment to come down to the House and call for five per cent. income tax in a time of peace. They talked of their national defences, but he believed that the best national defence was to be found in the hearts and affections of the working and middle classes, and that they were not likely to conciliate the one or the other, by putting on a war tax in a time of peace.¹

Such lively sallies were thoroughly appreciated by the House of Commons, and Osborne never rose without securing at once a good audience. The Radicals prized him accordingly as a man who was sure to attract attention, and so it is natural to find Mr. Hume writing to him 'to be sure to be in his place' to assist him in his motion for Reform in Parliament.

In May Osborne writes to his friend the Quaker supporter in Middlesex, Mr. Hull, from Newtown Anner :—

I propose leaving for London by the first week in June. I

¹ Hansard, vol. xcvi.

hope when I return to bring you and Mrs. Hull with me according to your promise. I expected you would have written me a line regarding the Reform movement, and the Middlesex meeting at which you moved a resolution. It is evident that Feargus O'Connor means to spoil sport for the real lovers of order, and that Lord John will not move on with the times. I see no help for us but through Peel. The Whigs never were sincere. Their Reform notions are very limited, but I suppose the middle classes have been too much frightened to grant any extensive concessions to the operatives.

Mr. Hume brought in his Reform resolution in July. Osborne's speech was a great success. Ministers had told Mr. Hume that his motion had not been proposed at the proper time.

I cannot help thinking (began Osborne) if there be one time more proper than another to amend and thereby strengthen your institutions, it is when the lowering horizon warns you of the coming tempest. . . . It is all very well to say that the cry for Reform has been raised by paid agitators and hired lecturers (such a remark was well calculated to raise a laugh in that House); but the hon. member had confounded cause and effect—the paid agitators and hired lecturers were the effect and not the cause of public discontent.

Osborne then went on to enumerate the different occasions on which household suffrage which he advocated had been adopted in principle by statesmen in the past. He quoted Sir J. C. Hobhouse's own resolution in 1830, and his statement that 'the opinion of the wisest man in the world, Jeremy Bentham, was in favour of this proposition;' but alas! said Osborne, 'since that period the hon. baronet had followed the example of another "Jeremy" better known for his versatility than his wisdom.' Then quoting Mr.

Disraeli's aphorism that the suffrage was not a trust or a right, or a privilege, Osborne declared that 'the truth is, the electors in one half of the small boroughs look upon the suffrage neither as a trust, a right, nor a privilege—but a *perquisite*. A celebrated satirist had said :—

Those who would gain the votes of British tribes
Must add to force of merit, force of bribes.

That was written in the last century, and is equally applicable at the present day, if not more so.' Then taking the theme suggested in Roebuck's letter, Osborne supported Mr. Hume's statistics of the preponderance of the aristocracy in the government of the country :—

There are altogether 274 persons (he continued) connected with Peers and the aristocracy in this House, besides forty-four officers of the army, eight of the navy, exclusive of those who are officially connected with the Government, making in the whole 334 members, who are under the direct influence of the aristocracy. Let it not be supposed that I am attacking the individuals ; I am attacking the system, not the men ; and I say that the power of the aristocracy has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. We have heard somewhat of family petitions in this House. Why, what is the whole foundation of the present Government in this country? Its foundation rests upon family arrangements. Nearly the whole Cabinet are related to each other by ties of birth or marriage. They form a snug family party! And they so far differ from another exhibition called the 'Happy Family,' that whereas in the one case all the animals are distinct in species, in the other, whilst admitting the great knowledge and talents of individuals, you can only account for their rickety offspring in legislation by knowing that the parents are all related. . . . We do not complain that men of the name of Howard and Stanley have places, but we complain that 'Lord Tomnoddies' are pushed into office,

while other men of equal and perhaps better pretensions, but not of such high birth, are excluded. . . . The people of this country only want a Government of practical men. . . .

Mr. Disraeli had concluded his speech by saying that the only possible Government in England was one which relied upon the use of 'traditional influences' and 'the great properties round which men rally.'

I beg leave to remind the hon. member (said Osborne) who now talks so slightly of the middle classes, that on a recent occasion, when the peace and safety of this metropolis were threatened, the cool heads and strong arms of the middle classes stood between the 'great properties' and revolution; it was to their existence you owe your present safety—that class which, uniting the ornamental and polished superstructure to the more rude and solid foundation, is in fact the cement which insures the stability of the glorious fabric. . . . As to the watchword of 'rallying round the great properties,' the same cry was raised in the days of Cromwell. It is recorded by an historian of whom the country may well be proud (I allude to the lamented father of the hon. member for Bucks), 'that one troop of Charles's Guards who fought at Edgehill in the great rebellion boasted that their revenues were equal to all the members' who voted against them in the Commons House of Parliament,' but we do not find that the 'large properties' of that day were able to continue against the power of public opinion. . . . Sir, I for one deprecate the arraying of class against class; the best friends of civilization are those who seek to unite all classes in a common bond; and as I believe, to use the words of a great historian, that 'it is the participation of numbers in the Government, and not the name of Republic as opposed to Monarchy, that constitutes liberty, and that true freedom is only consistent with the removal of all shackles in thought, education, and religion,' I shall, in concurrence with these sentiments, give my humble support to the resolutions of the hon. member for Montrose.

This speech of Osborne's attracted a wide atten-

tion. It was republished in pamphlet form, and largely circulated. The following letter from his personal friend, but political antagonist, Mr. Disraeli shows the opinion formed of it by that shrewd politician :—

July 17, 1848.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—I have been disappointed in not seeing you these few days past. I wished to have said something to you about your speech, for writing on such matters is a trifle too formal.

I think it is, without exception, your most considerable effort, and a very successful one. I have no doubt it will advance and assure your position. There was indeed only one opinion on our side about it, as their great attention, and even cheers, must have convinced you. For my own part, I always regret that, instead of crossing sabres, yours was not drawn at my right hand.

I was much touched by your unexpected reference to my father.

Yours sincerely,

D.

Grosvenor Gate.

In 1850 Osborne again made his mark in the House by a speech upon the same subject of Reform, in which he advocated triennial Parliaments. Lord John Russell had again refused to move in the matter, and was the central point of attack.

The noble lord (said Osborne) had told them to-night he would not put to sea in a storm or a calm. Then, was the noble lord waiting for a breeze? Was he waiting for the excitement of the approach of the general election, then to lay on the table a bill to extend the elective franchise?

He then spoke of the prevailing corruption in constituencies :—

When he referred to bribery as a national leprosy attaching to our Constitution, he wished to ask how were

majorities in that House made ? Was there no other form of corruption besides money ? It was generally supposed in the country that the emblem of a Secretary of the Treasury was a whip, but the members of that House knew that it was a fishing rod. The Secretary was indeed an expert fisher of men—a Parliamentary Isaac Walton, who knew how to bob for eels and angle very skilfully for country gentlemen. Some nibbled at colonial baits, others at empty honours, ribbons, and garters, but that House seemed to have a peculiar fancy for the honours of the 'bloody hand.' Look at the Peers made by Pitt ; and when the Melbourne Ministry was in difficulty, who did not remember the 'miraculous draught' of baronets that appeared all alive in the *Gazette* one morning ? He lamented that the days of chivalry were gone, but certainly it was much easier for a belted knight to win his way by succouring a Minister in his difficulty than by breaking lances for a damsel in distress.

In this way, throughout the existence of the Whig Ministry, Osborne was pertinacious in his satirical attacks. 'The present Government,' he would say, 'are confirmed invalids, and it is well known that confirmed invalids last the longest. Peel was a crutch at one time and Lord Jocelyn was a crutch at another, but the real party upon whose support the Whigs came into office—viz. the people—were thrown over by them.'

One evening he had been dining at Greenwich. Next day he delighted the House by some conversation he had had with the waiter. He asked the waiter how the Ministerial fish dinner went off. 'Oh, Sir,' said he, 'they looked quite like a family party, but they were more moderate than the last Ministers.' Osborne declared he agreed with the waiter, and he thought the country agreed with him too—the Ministers were like a family party, and were moderate men.

On a Wednesday the total abolition of the death

penalty was under discussion. There had been, a short time before, a terrible scene on the scaffold at Clonmel. The executioner was nearly thrown off the drop into the surging mob below by the sudden attack of the prisoner he was about to hang, and Osborne's opinions as to the undesirability of public executions had been strengthened by the ghastly incident. In the debate various speakers had descanted on the advantages of public hangings, notably Sir C. Burrell. 'The honourable baronet,' said Osborne, 'seemed to think that hanging formed an essential part of the Constitution of the country. It reminded him of the anecdote told of a man who was cast upon the shore of a strange country, and who on seeing a gallows cried out, "Thank God that I am in a constitutional and civilized country!" For himself, he objected to public executions, and thought the time had come when they should consider whether the capital punishment, if retained, ought not take place within the walls of the gaol.'

More than twenty years elapsed before public executions were abolished, and Osborne's opinion became generally adopted.

We have now shown Bernal Osborne in his relations to the political parties of the day. His action out of doors and his speeches in the House had marked him as an advanced thinker in domestic affairs. The time was arriving when he was to take a leading part in expressing the opinion of the country on foreign affairs.

CHAPTER XI.

BANQUET TO LORD PALMERSTON.

AT the end of the session of 1850 the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston with regard to some Grecian complications became the burning question of the day. Three years before, the house of Don Pacifico, a Portuguese Jew, but a British subject, resident in Athens, was attacked by an Athenian mob and plundered. The result was, firstly, a claim for compensation from the Greek Government, and finally a European complication. Lord Palmerston made the affair a point of national honour, and the British Fleet was sent to the Piræus. The results were international remonstrances, the withdrawal of the French Ambassador from London, and for some time serious apprehensions of war. Lord Stanley carried a resolution in the House of Lords, which, in effect, was a vote of censure on the Government.

The very party which had been unceasing in its efforts to censure Lord John Russell's domestic policy now came forward to defend the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston. Mr. Roebuck himself, speaking from the Opposition side of the House, proposed a resolution approving the general foreign policy of the Government. Osborne moved¹ the adjournment of the debate late

¹ The *Birmingham Mercury* thus describes the speech :—'The speech which was best received out of the whole set of orations by Whigs,

on the first night, so that when he rose to speak on the afternoon of the second day he addressed the House at its most crowded hour. He first asked why those men connected with the Liberal party who had for years been 'sedulously reviling and calumniating' Lord Palmerston had not come forward boldly and proposed a vote of censure. Then he proceeded to upbraid Sir F. Thesiger, and, passing on to Sir James Graham, who had supported the Government for the past three years, he criticised his opposition in the bitterest terms:—

When the right hon. baronet had preluded his speech with compliments, I could not help being reminded of some of those enormous and mighty animals of South America, those large serpents which are said to embroider their victims with saliva before they make a meal of their bodies. The right hon. gentleman talked of his friendship for the noble lord; but I own it struck me that he was exemplifying the truth of Rochefoucauld's remark, 'There is something agreeable to us, or not disagreeable, in the misfortunes of our best friends.' I had always been in the habit of supposing that the right hon. baronet, perched on the third bench opposite, was looked upon as a sort of guardian angel of her Majesty's Minister; that he was in fact

The sweet little cherub that sits up aloft
To take care of the life of poor Jack.

Radicals, Peelites, and Protectionists, was the speech of Bernal Osborne. It had the capital advantage of not being too long, and it was listened to by a crowded House with unabated attention throughout, notwithstanding the heat of the evening, which would have been excuse enough for any amount of inattention. It is seldom that a more striking and excellent speech has been delivered in the House of Commons. The member for Middlesex is precisely the man who would ensure the attention of any assembly in the world; for his pointed sentences, his sparkling epigrams, his neat personalities render him a most welcome and diverting speaker with an audience who like to be entertained as well as any inferior assembly.'

This allusion to Lord John Russell was received with roars of laughter, which were re-echoed next morning throughout England. After a searching examination of Sir James Graham's political inconsistencies, he left him with the following remark :—

I have said thus much because it is rumoured abroad that, like Cœlebs, the right hon. baronet is in search of a party. If the right hon. baronet could be candid, if he could know his own mind, I see many things in him to admire. His talent for business, his administrative capacity, are first rate ; but there is a screw loose somewhere, and assuredly a great party is not to be conciliated by such conduct.

It may well be asked why Osborne, who had so persistently attacked the Whig Government for the past two years, should now be foremost in its defence. As will be seen, it was not so much a defence of the Government as a defence of Palmerston against the Whig clique, who were afraid of the Foreign Secretary's general political tendencies. This will be seen from the following passage in his speech :—

During the insurrection in Naples (1848), certain French subjects suffered. The French Government made a demand, and the persons interested were fully indemnified. If it had been refused the French would have taken a different course from ours. But because we have in this country a strong aristocratic party who are always afraid of any Liberal man being in office, both the energies of the country and the liberal tendencies of the noble lord are crippled by the dead weight of that party. I wish the House to know, and fairly to ask itself why and wherefore this inveterate and envenomed hostility to the noble lord. Have they not a shade of suspicion that it is because he is identified on the continent of Europe with responsible governments, and the advance of liberal opinions . . . ? I have said that Greece is a pretext, and I solemnly believe that a widespread conspiracy has been organized to ruin the noble lord—a conspiracy in which ex-

kings and ex-ministers, kings without crowns and ministers without places, have joined with ministers with places, but I had almost said without characters. This conspiracy has its ramifications in various quarters, not only in the *salons* of Paris, but in the boudoirs of London. . . . I would have hon. gentlemen reflect before they vote a reversal of our foreign policy. We who have ships in every sea, and merchants at every port, what will be their situation if you vote a reversal of that policy which has hitherto upheld them? Reverse the foreign policy of this country and your commerce is crippled, and, as I conscientiously believe, civilization retarded. There is not a petty despot who will not peep from his hole and rejoice, not in the humiliation of the noble lord, but in the humiliation of England.

The same evening Lord Palmerston replied to his adversaries, and made that extraordinary effort of oratory which gained him a complete victory. The celebrated sentiment, which concluded a five-hours' speech, and his adoption of the motto, *Civis Romanus sum*, as an Englishman's right, was in everyone's mouth. Public opinion was completely with the Foreign Secretary, and steps were taken at once to commemorate the Liberal triumph. A grand banquet was given at the Reform Club to Lord Palmerston. The large candelabra in Pall Mall at the entrance of the Club were lighted, as on the occasion of a great public illumination, and the whole building was *en fête*. Bernal Osborne was honoured with being asked to take the chair on this occasion. His speech in proposing Lord Palmerston's health must be given *in extenso*, as it forms a climax in his political career. It ran as follows :—

Should I fail to do justice to the toast I am now about to propose, I can assure you it is not from underrating the importance of the occasion, still less from feeling any want of

sympathy with my theme, but rather that I have been more accustomed to pass strictures on the collective acts of a Government than to pay compliments to an individual Minister. But I should be wanting in that feeling of independence and candour which ought to characterize a representative of this great country, and the chairman of this great meeting, did I not on your part gladly seize the opportunity to express on your behalf our great satisfaction at being honoured with the presence of a Minister whose varied attainments and accomplishments, whose courtesy and mild bearing in private life, have won not merely the applause of a party, but the respect and admiration of the civilized world. And, gentlemen, by your leave, I will take this opportunity to say that we may look upon this, not as a meeting important only in its political bearings, but for the moral views of the subject: because it will show to the world that the great Liberal party of this country, differing as they may in minor shades of opinion, are not prepared to see the Minister calumniated, or the man misrepresented. Because he has been firm in his adherence to a Liberal course of policy, they will not carp at any minor or petty details; they will remember that—

‘ If severe in aught,
The love he bore to freedom was in fault.’

I, for one, rejoice that this question of foreign policy was brought before the Commons House of Parliament. I do so because I think it will show to other nations that the reasoning people of this country will not consent to sacrifice the principles of reform and natural progress because other people may have confounded anarchy with progress and mistaken revolution for reform. We are still prepared to walk in the paths of the Constitution, and to urge those reforms which may be consonant with the times. But I also rejoice that the noble lord has been exposed to personal attacks and recrimination, because it has given to the world and to future ages that great intellectual effort—those enunciations of great truths—that lucid array of facts—and, above all, that calm and Christian-like forbearance from recrimination which will

be handed to future ages as a monument of eloquence, to be studied by the philosopher and taken as a model by the statesman. Gentlemen, it is not for me to offer any laboured panegyric upon the noble lord. It has been reserved for one of the greatest and most favoured of modern writers to describe the greatest and most accomplished of modern statesmen :—

‘Warmed by the instincts of a knightly heart,
That roused at once if insult touched the realm,
He spurned each State-craft, each deceiving art,
And met his foes, no vizor to his helm.
This proved his worth : hereafter be our boast—
Who hated Britons hated him the most.’

You will at once recognize the original. It remains for me, my Lord Palmerston, to hand to you the names of the members of this club who subscribed to this document ; and I beg to add that the signatures would have swelled to much ampler dimensions had not the time for recording them been prematurely closed. You see around you many men distinguished alike in commerce, in science, and in politics.¹ I say to those gentlemen who urge the peaceful and calm pursuits of commerce, that, in drinking this toast, they are doing honour to a man who has preserved inviolable the property of British subjects, and maintained the honour of the British flag in all quarters of the globe. I say to those—

¹ Amongst those present on the occasion were Lord Sudeley, Lord James Stuart, M.P. ; Lord Ebrington, M.P. ; the Right Hon. C. D'Eyncourt, M.P. ; Sir Charles Napier ; Lord Marcus Hill, M.P. ; Mr. R. T. Blewitt, M.P. ; Colonel Freestun, M.P. ; Mr. James Matheson, M.P. ; Mr. A. Shafto Adair, M.P. ; Baron Rothschild, M.P. ; Sir M. Cholmondeley, M.P. ; Sir Henry Webb, Bart. ; Sir George Strickland, Bart., M.P. ; Mr. H. W. Tancred, M.P. ; Mr. Maurice O'Connell, M.P. ; Mr. M. Bass, M.P. ; Mr. Ralph Etwall, M.P. ; Mr. Joseph Locke, M.P. ; Mr. William Collins, M.P. ; Sir W. Gibson Craig, Bart., M.P. ; Sir De Lacy Evans, M.P. ; the Attorney-General, M.P. ; Hon. W. Cowper, M.P. ; Lord Camoys ; the Solicitor-General, M.P. ; Mr. E. K. Tenison, M.P. ; Sir R. Price, Bart., M.P. ; Hon. C. Clements, M.P. ; Herbert Ingram, Esq. ; W. M. Thackeray ; Mr. A. Hastie, M.P. ; Mr. W. Brown, M.P. ; Colonel Salwey, M.P. ; Mr. T. C. Grainger, M.P. ; Mr. Serjeant Murphy, &c., &c.

and I see many such around me—who are content with the calmer paths of literature and science, that you are doing honour to the orator and the scholar. Above all, I say to those—their name is 'Legion'—who love the peaceful path of constitutional responsible Government, you are doing honour to a man whose name in other climes is identified with those principles which we are assembled here to honour, and which form the charter of this club. I give you, then, with all the honours—that 'nine times nine' which is only devoted to celebrated men—'The health of our valued guest, Lord Palmerston.'

The toast was most enthusiastically received, and drunk with 'all the honours,' as indicated by the chairman.

The following letter from Sir E. Lytton Bulwer, received by Osborne after the banquet to Lord Palmerston, may prove useful, as showing the danger of making quotations from living authors :—

August 9, 1850.

DEAR OSBORNE,—It was extremely flattering to me on such an occasion as the dinner given to the honour of Lord Palmerston that you should have thought anything that I had written worthy of illustrating the transcendent talents of that great statesman. Much, however, as I was flattered by this notice, I could have wished that you had selected any other passage of my works for quotation, for, on the life of me, on reading it, I could not understand 'And met his foes, *no vizor to his helm.*' I certainly wrote it, but what has a *vizor* to do with a *helm* and a *helm* with a *vizor* (and yet the company cheered)? The line might have run, and not altogether inappropriately—for my hero, if I recollect rightly, although endowed with great talents, was rash, indiscreet, &c.—'And met each foe, no wiser than the last.' If the speeches should be printed, let the line be so altered, as it will appear in another edition.

Believe me, with sincere regard, yours very truly,

E. LYTTON BULWER.

This banquet to Lord Palmerston created at the

time a great deal of excitement in the political world. The *Illustrated London News*, then not long in existence, reproduced the scene and gave a full report of the proceedings. As chairman, the member for Middlesex was a prominent personage, and the manner in which he discharged the duties of his post was, by the critics, pronounced excellent. This event found Osborne in his forty-second year, with nine years' Parliamentary experience. He had fought his way into the front rank of independent politicians, and was already marked out for political preferment.

CHAPTER XII.

SESSION OF 1851—REFUSAL OF OFFICE.

NOT long after the banquet Lord Palmerston was dismissed from the Foreign Office, and when Parliament re-assembled in February 1851, the feeling of the House was very strong against Lord John Russell's Ministry. In the previous autumn England had been roused by the action of Pope Pius IX., who had issued a bull for the creation of twelve Roman Catholic bishoprics, and the systematic division of England into new dioceses. There was a National Protestant movement against what was then termed Papal Aggression, and the Government were forced to bring in a bill against the assumption of ecclesiastical titles. Osborne, it will be seen, opposed the bill from the first, stigmatizing it as a revival of the Penal Laws. In a speech in the House of Commons he said :—

He regretted the 'No Popery' cry and the revival of the old *odium theologicum*. When he saw the frenzy that had seized upon all classes of the people ; when he read the post-prandial excitement of the Lord High Chancellor in the midst of the hiccuping hysterics of the Court of Aldermen ; when he saw the Prime Minister, and Lord Mayor, and all classes in a frenzy, he could not but recall to mind those days

When oyster-women locked their fish up
And trudged away to cry 'no bishop.'

He spoke at length and with considerable bitterness.

Alluding to Ireland, he declared that the real bishops were the MacHales and Cullens, at which there were loud cries of 'Oh, oh!' He, however, reiterated his statement, and wound up what was termed a violent speech by declaring that the bill trenched upon the liberties of religious freedom and the free expression of private judgment.

For three years Osborne had, in conjunction with Mr. Hume and Mr. Roebuck, pursued the rôle of 'candid friend' towards the Whig Ministry. Lord John Russell now returned good for evil, and in the following letter, addressed to Newtown Anner, offered Osborne office :—

November 19, 1851.

DEAR MR. OSBORNE,—General Fox has tendered his resignation of the office of Surveyor-General of Ordnance. I have not yet laid it before the Queen, and before I do so I should wish to know whether I may recommend you to her Majesty as General Fox's successor. It is an office in which, by diligence and attention, much good may be done, and with the abilities which you possess you might render considerable public service.

I propose that the change should take place at the end of the year.

I do not suppose, so near the close of Parliament, your re-election would encounter much difficulty, but if you are in other respects inclined to accept the office you can ascertain this first, before you give me a final answer.

I remain, yours very truly,

JOHN RUSSELL.

R. B. Osborne, Esq.

To this Osborne replied as follows :—

Newtown Anner, Clonmel : November 24, 1851.

DEAR LORD JOHN RUSSELL,—I beg to acknowledge your letter of the 19th inst., intimating the resignation of General Fox and your readiness to submit my name to her Majesty for the office of Surveyor-General of the Ordnance.

I politically feel flattered by the terms in which you have made this communication, but previous to giving a final reply I should esteem it an additional mark of consideration if you would permit me to have the honour of an interview with you, and for this purpose I shall hold myself in readiness to wait upon your lordship in London, or elsewhere, at such time as may suit your convenience. Trusting this may not interfere with any other arrangement,

I have the honour to subscribe myself,

Very faithfully,

RALPH OSBORNE.

To the Right Hon. Lord John Russell.

To this Lord John Russell replied :—

November 27, 1851.

DEAR MR. OSBORNE,—I am much obliged for your answer, and shall be ready to see you in Downing Street on December 5 at half-past one.

Yours truly,

JOHN RUSSELL.

The interview at Downing Street resulted in Osborne's refusing the office of Surveyor-General of the Ordnance. He stated his reasons for so doing in public, in the following year, on the Middlesex hustings. During his speech someone interrupted by crying 'Place! place!' Osborne at once replied, 'It has been suggested by a kind friend on the left that I want a place. Now, if I wanted a place, I might have had one last November. I refused that place because I did not think it consistent with the dignity of the member for Middlesex to hold such an office.' There were probably other reasons. The Surveyor-General of the Ordnance was a very subordinate office, and one for which Osborne would not submit to be muzzled. The offer was probably a feeler. At all events, it was the shadow of coming events. His accession to the Treasury Bench was now only a matter of time and opportunity.

CHAPTER XIII.

OPPOSITION TO THE DERBY GOVERNMENT, 1852.

It was just at this moment that the public mind was much agitated with regard to the attitude towards England by Louis Napoleon. The *coup d'état* by which he had come to supreme power in Paris was fresh in the minds of the English people, and an invasion of England was amongst the dangers anticipated. A Militia Bill was brought in by Lord John Russell's Government. It received general opposition. Lord Palmerston moved an amendment, in which the Government was defeated, and the result was a change of Ministry.

In the debate upon the situation, Bernal Osborne described the collapse of the Russell Cabinet admirably :—'With peace abroad, prosperity at home, and an immense surplus, the Government had gone down in a sunny sea.' He pointed somewhat prophetically to Sir James Graham as a man who, if called to the head of the country, would conduct the business with honour to himself and satisfaction to the people.

The new Ministry was of a strong Tory type, composed entirely of the Protectionist¹ party. Lord

¹ The following letter from Roebuck to Osborne shows the rumours of the day :—

Monday, February 23, 1852.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—I want to see you much. The new men *will propose a 5s. duty on corn* ; this, if we play our cards well, will be the

Derby was Premier and Mr. Disraeli Chancellor of the Exchequer. Osborne and Disraeli had kept up a warm friendship ever since their first acquaintance, despite the fact that they were frequently pitted against each other in debate.

Osborne made himself conspicuous in 'Supply' by an early attack upon the new Government. He first, however, took occasion to compliment Mr. Disraeli upon his accession to power. He said he was rejoiced by the elevation of his friend to the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had had a hard card to play, but had achieved his position without any aristocratic connexion. He looked upon it as a tribute to the intellectual superiority of the age when he saw such a man the leader of the great aristocratic party of England, the man who carried them into power and made them what they now were, and he rejoiced therefore at his elevation.

The Derby Cabinet, consisting of thirteen members, was first nicknamed the 'Who? Who?' Ministry.¹ In his speech Osborne followed suit, dissecting its members with great gusto. He called them 'a baker's

making of a real country party, I mean a national one as opposed to that of a Whig clique—with which I am determined hereafter to have no connexion; but I wish much to ascertain the sentiments of men like yourself who might take a lead and move in this direction. Bright also might do much in this way; but if you all falter, then the game is up, and we shall play lackeys to the Whigs for the rest of our political lives. I for myself feel so strongly about this, that I shall on ascertaining what chance there may be for our emancipation decide as to continuing at all as a politician. Think over the point I moot, and let us talk upon it.

Yours very truly,

J. A. ROEBUCK.

R. B. Osborne, Esq., M.P.

¹ When Lord Derby was telling the Duke of Wellington the names of the Cabinet, the Duke, who was rather deaf, after each unfamiliar name said, 'Who? Who?' Hence the nickname.

dozen leagued together to put a tax upon bread,' and nicknamed them the 'Cabinet of all the squires.' Mr. Whiteside, who was then Solicitor-General for Ireland, was put up to answer Osborne, and made a bitter personal attack upon his abilities and religious opinions. In his reply Osborne said that Mr. Whiteside had made an imputation upon his skill as a debater, which of course he was quite at liberty to suggest, but he had thought proper to impugn his opinions on a more sacred subject. As to his skill as a debater, he could only say this, that at all events he never indulged in the pompous periods of vapid declamation, and, as to the other matter, he never made a profession of the Pharisaical sanctity and ebullitions of Orange piety engrafted upon the zeal and fanaticism of Latter Day Saints.

It soon became evident that the new Government were only feeling their way, and that a dissolution was imminent. A motion for an inquiry into the state of Maynooth College was brought forward by Mr. Spooner, and again Osborne spoke strongly upon the subject. He said in the face of a general election 'some members might, perhaps, with an eye to their constituencies, shirk the Maynooth question.' He declared it was brought forward merely to raise a 'No Popery' cry, and reiterated his old opinions as to the proper policy which ought to be pursued with regard to Ireland. These speeches occasioned great indignation amongst the Evangelical Protestant sects in the county of Middlesex, and were the principal cause of the violent opposition to Bernal Osborne's re-election shortly afterwards.

One of Mr. Disraeli's most important bills was a 'measure of internal defence.' Osborne in the debate

stated his views upon the subject of our national defence. He said he could not adopt the principles of what was known even then as the Peace-at-any-Price party. Still he was always averse to war. 'The most expensive luxury of the day,' he remarked, 'was a successful general.' He pointed out to the Peace party that 'in Utopia itself the people were allowed to have arms and fight in defence of their laws and institutions.' Then attacking the great expense of the English military system, he said in one sense the old proverb was true—viz. that one Englishman is worth two Frenchmen, for an English soldier cost double the amount of one French soldier.

His attack upon Mr. Disraeli was bitterly sarcastic, one of his remarks being that the right hon. gentleman was particularly skilful in light infantry movements. 'If,' he concluded, 'protection to the nation was wanted, it could be most readily obtained from the wooden walls of England, and *from giving full scope to the development of Volunteer rifle corps*,—a remark which was almost a prediction. He called on the House 'not to agree to a measure which had been brought forward in the hurried scramble of a party to power, and which had been discussed in the panic of an expiring Parliament.'

Throughout the short-lived existence of the Derby-Disraeli Ministry there was no more unsparing or frequent critic of its principles and shortcomings than Bernal Osborne. He shone conspicuously on the Opposition benches, and was regarded by the Conservative party as one of the few men able to confront their own leader and fight him with his own shining weapons of sarcastic wit and unfailing reply.¹ The

¹ The *Times*, July 22, 1852 :—'To no man more than to Mr. Osborne

efforts made to dislodge him at the general election from Middlesex, as well as the tone of the public Press, sufficiently show that Osborne, if he chose, had a wide career of political usefulness open to him.

do we owe it that the middle and lower classes of this country have clearly understood and justly appreciated the shabby manoeuvring and hollow casuistry of the Derby Government. No one has demolished more of Mr. Disraeli's shams and Mr. Walpole's plausibilities ; no one has tracked more closely and exposed more felicitously the doubling and winding of a Government which was Protectionist in March, a readjuster of local taxation in June, and in July has entirely forgotten the first, throws cold water on the second, and is hatching a third monster whose shape and figure its very parents seem quite unable to conjecture.'

CHAPTER XIV.

SECOND MIDDLESEX ELECTION—MIDDLESEX, 1852.

THE dissolution of Parliament in 1852 brought with it an election time of unexampled excitement. The Papal Aggression cry was revived by the Tories, and throughout the kingdom 'No Popery' was the most potent political influence of the hour. Bernal Osborne's plain speaking in the House of Commons had created a very strong feeling against him amongst the Evangelical Protestant party, and it was evident from the first that the most desperate efforts would be made to oust him from the representation of Middlesex. Lord Blandford¹ consented to contest the seat. His address was aimed directly at Osborne's Parliamentary conduct, 'more particularly to his conduct on all questions bearing upon Protestantism, to his support of all measures of Romish aggression, and to the utter disregard which he has at all times manifested alike in his speeches and his votes to the interests of Protestantism.'

The entire force of the Conservative party in Middlesex converged on Osborne alone. Lord Robert Grosvenor, who sought re-election, was left unattacked. Apart from the religious question, Osborne had made himself peculiarly obnoxious to the Tories. He was a thorn in their side in Parliament, and every effort was to be made to ensure his defeat.

¹ The late Duke of Marlborough.

The walls on all sides soon flamed with placards. 'Protestant Electors of Middlesex! Reserve your Votes!! Beware of Osborne! The Advocate of Papal Aggression, Leader of the Pope's Brass Band! and Member of the Irish Brigade!' Handbills were industriously circulated, announcing the fact that the Metropolitan Catholic Committee had earnestly requested Catholic electors to plump for Osborne. The combined efforts of Protectionism and Protestantism were thrown into the balance against the Radical candidate, and the result was a close and exciting election.

Once more Bernal Osborne was forced to make great personal efforts to win his way back to Parliament, and once more he succeeded by dint of sheer native ability and address. The power of his tongue was never more severely tested than in this election, and, as before, his hustings speeches contributed greatly to his success. Indeed, crowds came from all parts to hear the man who had already made for himself the reputation of being one of the best hustings speakers in England. The accounts of such an election as this make the present system seem flat and uninteresting. The nomination took place at Brentford, the hustings being erected in front of the Town Hall. From the windows of the committee-room of Lord R. Grosvenor and Mr. Osborne were displayed their colours of green, yellow, and blue, surmounted by a placard bearing the inscription, 'Blandford—Protection—Starvation—Cant.' A supporter of Free Trade occupied an elevated position above with a very large loaf placed on his head, while 'Protection' was represented by a little boy who displayed between his fingers a very small loaf. As the time for the proposal of candidates

drew near, Brentford had become gay and hilarious. Flags, bands, boardmen, boys, and roughs, were all in attendance. Mr. Hume proposed, and Sir Edward Colebrooke seconded, Osborne. On rising to address the meeting, he was saluted by a tempest of yells and hisses. On the left of the hustings a party of gentlemen, in spite of Lord Blandford's entreaties, were persistent in their interruptions. So great was the uproar, and so intermittent were Osborne's remarks forced to be, that the report of his speech is most fragmentary. Not once, however, did he lose his presence of mind. Now and then his powerful voice dominated the yelling mob, and he was heard for a brief while. He charged his opponents with conducting the contest 'on the cant of a mock semi-politico-religious cry, having Protection under the cloak of Protestantism,' and finished a great physical effort with the following words:—

I have advocated civil and religious liberty, and amongst my votes in favour of civil and religious liberty I place the votes which I have given for the abolition of church rates and for the admission of our Jewish fellow-subjects to Parliament. But if it be said that I should stoop to seek your votes or support by raising a religious cry, much as I prize the representation of the county of Middlesex, much as I desire to stand highly in the opinion of my countrymen, not all the wealth of Blenheim, nor the station of the noble marquis, would tempt me to ask your votes on a 'No Popery' cry. I stand before you prepared to inquire into the grants to all Churches, but I will stigmatize none. This is no arena for entering into theological discussions—fallible men have no right to judge fallible men—these are not the discussions that should be introduced upon the hustings—this contest is to be fought on higher grounds, for it is really the contest of Protestantism against intolerance. What is your notion of Protestantism? If there be one thing more sacred than

another in the Protestant institutions of the country, it is the right to which every man is entitled of exercising his private judgment. I will be no party to interfering with that right, or to pointing the finger of scorn against any particular body of my fellow-countrymen, but I will be a party to an inquiry into all votes which are given by the people of this country towards the support of any religion. It has been suggested by a kind friend on my left that I want a place. Now, if I wanted a place I might have had one in November last. It was a place, not amounting to 7,000*l.* a year in the Post Office, but it was a place amounting to 2,000*l.* a year, which many of you would have been very glad to take. I refused that place because I did not think it consistent with the dignity of the member of the great county of Middlesex to hold office. We are told that the deluge will occur if Lord Derby does not remain in office. This reminds me of the fable of the spider, who, when its web was swept away, thought the world had come to an end. If the deluge does occur, I hope that from it will spring a rainbow, in which the various tints of party will be combined, and that, by their union together, we shall have a Government in power that will not neglect your interests, and, above all, will not condescend to seek your suffrages on a 'No Popery' cry. I will say in conclusion that I am not one to judge severely of what is said during the heat of an election contest. I think, on the whole, you have behaved remarkably well. You have also behaved remarkably well in a way you are not aware of. You have placed my symbol—the laurel—over Lord Blandford's colours. That has always been the symbol of the Liberal electors of Middlesex, and it now waves over the colours of the noble marquis. I now ask you to give me your support and exertions, and I shall again sit for the county of Middlesex.

Osborne's pretty allusion to his hopes of a coalition Government in case of the defeat of Lord Derby was probably forgotten in the tumult of the moment, but it shows that he had made a shrewd forecast in his own mind as to the political future. Not in the least dis-

couraged by the exhibition of rowdyism at the nomination, Bernal Osborne found other platforms to speak from, and it was very soon evident that he was by far the most popular candidate. Sometimes he spoke three times a day. At Mile End, where he was particularly popular, on being introduced to a meeting he said he had already addressed two meetings, and felt like a racehorse run off its legs. To carry out the metaphor, he had run ten heats for the Middlesex County Cup in seven days, and had taken two severe sweats that morning. As the present Prime Minister was connected with the turf, he might go on in the same strain, and warn the electors not to let themselves be led away from running the old Tory and Protectionist fox to earth by the 'No Popery' drag.

On the polling day, after four o'clock, Osborne paid a visit to his committee-room at King's Cross, and from a balcony there addressed a large concourse of people. He commenced by declaring he was quite unaware of the state of the poll :—

You have nobly supported me, and I am proportionately grateful for your exertions, and whether I am a member of Parliament, or whether I retire into private life, my feelings are with you, my wishes are with you—(a Voice : 'Maynooth')—and to you who call out Maynooth—to that gentleman, whom I see—I accept the omen ; he has crape round his hat, he is in mourning for Lord Blandford and his defeat ; to you I say—for I will shrink from nothing—I am not to be deterred by a base and bigoted cry, and you, my friends, are not to be deceived, I trust, by what is so evidently fallacious. I am obliged to my friend with the crape round his hat ; I am obliged to my friend with an apparent smile on his face, but a mournful feeling in his heart—I am obliged to him, because I anticipate that he will follow as chief mourner at the funeral of Protection ; and I should feel still more indebted to him

if, on this occasion, he would figure as a mute. My feelings are not with the Pope, nor with Cardinal Wiseman, but with you and such as you—with the great mass of the intelligent British public. Don't believe what has been told you by the old Tory gang, who, being short of a cry at the present election, have dug out of its grave, and have brought to 'revisit the glimpses of the moon'—for they work by night—the old ghost of the 'No Popery' cry. It is not the Pope; it is bread, it is tea, it is sugar—it is your beef that is in question. That's the real papal bull; it is not a bull from Rome, but English beef that is at stake. Let me show you a good omen (said Mr. Osborne, pointing to a cab with one of the Marquis of Blandford's placards at the side, and a portmanteau turned upside down at the top): the Marquis is going out of town. If my vision does not deceive me, it is not the marquis who is inside, but the Duke of Marlborough. Give him three cheers, and send him home. Well, I have told you that the question is not one of Popes. You have been told, forsooth, that I am the champion of Cardinal Wiseman. Now I put it to you—I am afraid the ladies won't think me a handsome man—for I have not the advantages of Lord Robert Grosvenor, nor the flowing hair of the Marquis of Blandford—I put it to you, do I look like a Jesuit? Do I look like a supporter of Lord Derby's Government?

It was thus Osborne charmed a crowd. His resources were unbounded, and he seemed able to turn every incident to his own advantage.

Upon the day of the declaration of the poll, the Liberal candidates went in procession to the Brentford hustings. At ten o'clock about a thousand people were assembled in front of the Reform Club, most of them with laurel leaves in their hats, waiting for the departure of Mr. Osborne, whose carriage, drawn by four greys, was at the door. When he appeared with Mr. Hume and Mr. Phinn there was great cheering, and all along the road from Piccadilly to Kensington,

through Hammersmith and Kew into Brentford, the greatest enthusiasm was displayed, especially amongst the women, who ran alongside of the carriage, endeavouring to shake hands with the popular hero. The space in front of the hustings was densely crowded when the sheriff declared the poll, which stood thus :—

Lord R. Grosvenor	.	.	5,241
Mr. R. Osborne	.	.	4,390
Marquis of Blandford	.	.	4,258

Majority for Mr. Osborne . . . 132

As usual, the candidates made speeches. Osborne dashed at once into a vein of humour :—

Fellow-countrymen, Electors and Non-electors of the County of Middlesex,—My noble colleague, who has just addressed you, has typified himself to you as a Liberal of the slow school, and has presented me to your notice as a Liberal of the fast school. Well, gentlemen, you have heard Old Rapid with attention ; may I now claim your indulgence for Young Rapid ? And also, may I ask a patient and a kind hearing for the gentleman of the old school, in the patent safety cab, who follows us ? . . . It has been said, however, ‘Beware of that Osborne ; he is a man of ultra-democratic tendency ;’ and I have been rather surprised to find that I, who pique myself on being rather a well-dressed man, am represented to you as being a sort of *sans-culottes*.

His thanks to his friends were not the least graceful portions of his happy speech :—

I cannot retire from these hustings without expressing my thanks to the fullest extent—my warm, heartfelt thanks to the 4,390 electors, who at great sacrifice, at great loss of time (‘Of trade’)—yes, of trade—with great exertions made to hinder them from voting, came up to the poll and voted, not for me, but for the principles represented in my person. Still less can I retire without naming one who has served his

country for forty years, and to whom you all owe a deep debt of gratitude—the man who never yet gave a bad vote, who has always been your friend and the friend of progress—I mean Mr. Hume. Why, on this occasion, the Nestor of reform was metamorphosed into its Achilles, and he was everywhere exhorting the timid, rousing up the brave, and travelling from London to Brentford, and from Brentford to London, with voters in his carriage.

A banquet was held at the Albion Hotel, Hammer-smith, to celebrate the return of the Liberal candidates, at which three hundred and fifty gentlemen sat down, and a vast number of speeches were made, congratulating Osborne upon his success. Amongst the many kind letters received by him, the following, from Mr. Roebuck, was particularly prized :—

Milton, Lymington : Sunday, July 25, 1852.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—Dining at Leeds with Cobden the day before your polling day, he said, ‘If I had a vote in Middlesex, I would go to town and vote for Osborne.’ ‘So would I,’ I remarked; and would that I had the vote, for assuredly Osborne’s exclusion from the House would grieve me more than that of any other man.’

Judge then of my surprise on arriving here last Friday night at finding two letters from your committee asking me as a voter to go to town and vote for you. How I became a voter I know not, but I am annoyed at my own ignorance, and the folly of those who allowed these letters to remain here unforwarded. However, the game has been played, and heartily rejoiced I am to say won also. You know and often say I am not apt to praise, so accept my congratulations on the present occasion as something rare, if not of worth. What I said at Leeds I feel, and I am therefore the more pleased by the result.

But we are really in a minority—that is, not on the question of policy, but on the existence of the Derby Ministry. All the so-called Liberal-Conservatives will vote to keep Lord Derby in—and I shall not be sorry ; the party who have

a weak Ministry holding on to office always lose in effect, and we shall gain more in measures under Lord Derby than we should with Lord John, faltering as the leader of the Liberals. But for all this we must not let the Ministers escape without animadversion, but we ought on the first occasion to give vent to our opinion respecting them ; I intend doing so, as fiercely as I know how. Believe me, dear Osborne,

Yours very truly,

J. A. ROEBUCK.

Amongst the numerous election squibs and broadsides published during the contest was one in sixteen stanzas of verse, headed 'Osborne's Address to the Electors of Middlesex at the Battle of the Hustings.' The merit of the poem may be gathered from the concluding lines, which run thus :—

Widdrington, upon his stumps !

Never reckoned harder thumps ;

Oh ! you have, you have been trumps !

Yes, you have to me !

When you would a 'Blenheim' whip,

Make him dance and make him skip,

Cry out Osborne ! Hip ! Hip ! Hip !

Hurrah, Victory !

Copies were sent to Osborne, with the accompanying letter, which itself is almost a curiosity of literature :—

142 Cheapside : July 28, 1852.

SIR,—We have taken the liberty of forwarding you a 'Copy of an Address' commemorative of the glorious victory you have achieved in Middlesex.

We hope to have the pleasure of an order for a few copies for the benefit of the writer—a man of noble mind and glorious energy. Like most men of genius, he is not a disciple of Plutus.

You will perceive, Sir, the Address is penned by no ordi-

nary man, that it literally does contain 'thoughts which breathe and words that burn.' The 'Blenheim' spaniel is a happy hit.

Hoping it may meet with approval, we remain, Sir,
Your most obedient servants,

BOYD & CO.

R. B. Osborne, Esq., M.P.

Thus ended Osborne's third contested election. He won it, as he had won the two previous battles, by his individual exertions and personal ability. It would appear from the following letter that Osborne's first acquaintance with Mr. Delane, the editor of the *Times*, commenced during this election :—

Serjeants' Inn, July 8.

MY DEAR SIR,—The coincidence of elections for the last three or four days has prevented me from doing justice to your meetings ; but there will now, I hope, be time and space to report them. I have, therefore, deputed the bearer, Mr. Russell, one of the best of our Parliamentary corps, to attach himself exclusively to your committee, and if you give him reasonable facilities, it will be neither his fault nor mine if any of the flowers of your eloquence bloom unseen. Russell has had much Irish election and 'monster' meeting experience. If I can be of any service, pray have no hesitation in commanding

Yours faithfully,

JOHN T. DELANE.

This was the first of a series of letters which passed between the politician and the journalist. They soon appear to have become intimate, and the correspondence, which was maintained for many years, shows that the editor of the *Times* and Bernal Osborne were always on terms of personal and political intimacy.

Mr. Russell, at that time not long arrived from Ireland, whose name is mentioned in Delane's letter, was with Osborne all through this Middlesex campaign,

and he tells a characteristic anecdote of the man. After a hard day's work at Brentford, Russell was returning with Hume and Osborne to London. Arrived at the Reform Club, the party alighted. 'Come in and dine with me,' said Osborne to Russell. 'Impossible,' replied the journalist; 'I must be off to the *Times* office, and transcribe my notes;' at the same time, putting his hand mechanically into his pocket for his note-book, he discovered it was nowhere to be found. Horror-struck at the thought, he exclaimed, 'And I verily believe I have lost them, after all!' 'Depend upon it, Russell,' said Osborne, 'Joe Hume has stolen them!' The note-book, however, was never found, and the *Times* report of the day's electioneering was consequently very incomplete.

From that moment Osborne and Russell became friends, and saw each other frequently at various times and places—at Delane's room in Serjeants' Inn, sitting round the dinner-table with such men as Lowe, Wingrove Cooke, Thackeray and Higgins and Oliphant; and at Sandringham, where in later years both the Radical politician and the great newspaper correspondent were equally welcome.

CHAPTER XV.

IN THE ABERDEEN GOVERNMENT.

BERNAL OSBORNE came back to the House of Commons on his second return for Middlesex with a very strong Parliamentary position. He had signalized himself equally as a critic of Whig and Tory administrations. By some he was looked upon as an ultra-Democrat. The Protestant Evangelical party said he was in league with the Pope, while in the eyes of the London masses he represented the rights of the people.

The year 1852 closed with an autumn session. The debate upon the Address soon showed that the Conservative Government was on the point of defeat. Osborne again came forward as one of the chief speakers. He declared that the Address had been 'dictated by the genius of rigmarole and traced by the hand of mystification.' He warned the country gentlemen that Mr. Disraeli might become the 'Flying Dutchman of the agricultural party;' and he finally retorted the old accusation of the Tory Chancellor that Peel's Government was an 'organized hypocrisy.' Before the year was out the Derby Ministry had fallen and Lord Aberdeen was Prime Minister of the 'Cabinet of all the talents.'¹

¹ The following was the Cabinet :—

Prime Minister	.	.	.	.	Lord Aberdeen.
Lord Chancellor	.	.	.	.	Lord Cranworth.

Once more Osborne was offered office, and this time he accepted it. The following correspondence took place during the negotiations :—

Monday, December 27, 1852.

DEAR LORD JOHN RUSSELL,—I mentioned to you on Saturday last that, influenced by the advice of friends together with my own convictions, I was not inclined to accept the particular office under Lord Aberdeen's administration which you were so kind as to place at my disposal. After reflecting on the peculiar nature of public affairs at this juncture, and the very handsome tones in which you expressed yourself towards me at our late interview, I feel bound in some measure to disregard the partial suggestions of friends, and the still more partial promptings of self-estimation by waiving all personal scruples on the score of a predilection for any particular office, and placing myself unreservedly in your hands. I trust you will not deem it too exacting should I request you to assure Lord Aberdeen that I have come to this resolution, not only from a consideration of the difficulties which encircle his position at this period, but also from the confidence and respect I entertain for your character and motives. Having made this brief explanation, if it be consistent with the views of her Majesty's present Government to concede to me the liberty of maintaining my opinions on the question of the 'Ballot' and an amendment of the representation, I am ready to place my Parliamentary services at your disposal. I have the honour to write myself,

Most faithfully yours, RALPH OSBORNE.

The Right Hon. Lord John Russell, M.P.

Chancellor of the Exchequer	.	.	Mr. Gladstone.
President of the Council	.	.	Lord Granville.
Privy Seal	.	.	The Duke of Argyll.
Home Secretary	.	.	Lord Palmerston.
Foreign Secretary	.	.	Lord John Russell.
Colonial Secretary	.	.	The Duke of Newcastle.
First Lord of the Admiralty	.	.	Sir James Graham.
President of the Board of Control	.	.	Sir Charles Wood.
Secretary at War	.	.	Mr. Sidney Herbert.
First Commissioner of Works	.	.	Sir W. Molesworth.
			The Marquis of Lansdowne.

December 28, 1852.

DEAR MR. OSBORNE,—I am very much obliged to you for the confidence you repose in me.

Colonel Fitzroy, who had accepted the office of Secretary of the Admiralty, has consented to give it up if the public service will be thereby promoted. But he has some experience and aptitude for the Admiralty. Your knowledge of Ireland will be of great use at the Home Office, and my advice to you is to accept that office.

Your vote on the 'Ballot' will be quite free. Upon reform, generally, all I ask is that you will wait for the Government measure.

Yours truly,

J. RUSSELL.

The result of this correspondence was that Bernal Osborne was appointed Secretary to the Admiralty under Sir James Graham, the very man whom he had attacked so bitterly in the 'Don Pacifico' debate.

There can be no question that he had won his position by sheer force of natural ability. He had contrived to express views on political questions in a manner which had interested the House and gained him the attention of the country. His attitude towards the political questions of the day was even then unique, and it was only by his accession to office that it became evident how much he was missed as a brilliant debater in the House of Commons. Osborne's acceptance of office resulted finally in his absolute effacement from the House of Commons debates. On one or two occasions after he had taken his place on the front Treasury bench he made speeches, but they proved by no means of the usual official character. On one occasion his reply partook of his old vein of banter. A suggestion was made that whiskey should be used in the Royal Navy instead of rum, and the idea was supported by a Mr. French, the member for

Roscommon. In his answer, the Secretary of the Admiralty put the argument thus: 'Whiskey was made in Ireland, rum was used in the navy, therefore whiskey ought to be substituted for rum on board her Majesty's ships. As well might the sheep-growers of Sussex make it a complaint that beef only was used in the navy, and ask the House why it was they did not take their mutton. The hon. member for Roscommon was the representative of the great whiskey-growing interest, and because their interests might be served, therefore the House were to compel seamen of the navy to drink whiskey instead of rum.'

But the two speeches made by Osborne when in office, which resulted in finally closing his mouth, were delivered upon two very dissimilar subjects. The first was upon a motion for an inquiry into conventual and monastic institutions. His speech made a great sensation, and, in fact, quite confounded the Government. In his attack upon the proposal he entirely forgot the Secretaryship of the Admiralty, and spoke with all the old joyous indifference to any feeling of responsibilities which had charmed the House in his earlier days. His speech was a scene from beginning to end. The new Parliament included a very large proportion of men who only knew Osborne by reputation, and who had never heard him until that night. The smoking-room and the tea-room emptied when it was known who was up, and for an hour he kept a full House in a roar of delighted laughter. He rattled jokes over the head of Mr. Newdegate in a way that made even Mr. Newdegate's friends laugh loudly. His ridicule of Protestant bigotry was very effective, and his hits at Protestantism were equally enjoyed both by Catholics, Tories, and Whigs. He said that the inquiry was

actuated by real sectarian rancour, which possessed some of the properties ascribed to the trunk of the elephant. There is nothing too monstrous which it cannot grasp, and nothing so petty and so trivial which it will not stoop to scrape together. This speech was made after a year's silence, and it greatly discomposed the Government. Mr. Gladstone had to get up and say that the question was not whether the committee should be granted at all, but of whom it should be composed. The scene was amusing, but it tended to make the Government chary of again using their Admiralty Secretary as a spokesman.

In January 1855 Osborne once more appeared in his old character as a free lance. The Crimean War had just commenced. His old friend and former political comrade, Mr. Roebuck, had moved for a Select Committee to inquire into the condition of the Army before Sebastopol, and the Commissariat Department. The debate lasted several days, and was the great topic of the day. Dr. Russell, the *Times* correspondent in the Crimea, had made the whole question of the British army the subject for a grave incrimination, and the result was a debate on which depended the fate of the Government.

Osborne did not attempt any defence of the general management of the war. He attacked the system, which he declared was entirely answerable for the first failures of the Crimean campaign. 'I maintain,' he said, 'you must entirely reconstruct your whole military system. The time has arrived when you cannot expect an army, besides winning battles in the field, to go through the vicissitudes of a campaign under the present state of things. You must lay an unsparing hand on that building adjacent to these premises.

You must see, in fact, whether you can find a modern Hercules to turn the Serpentine through the Horse Guards and all the ramifications of the War Office.' He then attacked the purchase system, and continued : ' I have been told it is not proper for a person in my situation to speak ; but in my mind the safety of our whole army is at stake. . . . It is very painful to me to make this statement, but I have a superior duty to perform. I represent a constituency. It is not the first time I have made these representations to the House, and I do say now, with the most perfect sincerity, that I feel I am performing a most sacred duty.'

This plain speaking naturally fell like a thunderbolt upon the Aberdeen Ministry, and again the next Treasury Bench speaker was obliged to endeavour to tone down the impression of Osborne's speech. But it was of no avail. Mr. Roebuck's motion for inquiring into the War administration was carried, and the Government resigned.

The Administration, however, survived under a somewhat altered form, and Lord Palmerston came to the head of affairs in the House of Commons. Osborne remained at the Admiralty until 1857, when Lord Palmerston was defeated on the Chinese question, and a general election surprised the country. Osborne did not seek re-election in Middlesex, considering that his official position prevented him from performing satisfactorily his duty to so large and important a constituency. His connection with the Admiralty was quite sufficient to attract the attention of the Liberals of Dover, who were on the look-out for a candidate, and accordingly he accepted the task of contesting the seat.

CHAPTER XVI.

DOVER, 1857-59.

THROUGHOUT the various changes in the aspect of parties during the years of his official life, Osborne had been a strong supporter of Lord Palmerston. He now came, together with Sir William Russell, before the Dover constituents as a Palmerstonian, opposed by two Liberal-Conservatives, supporters of Lord Derby—Sir George Clarke, Bart., and Mr. G. W. Hope.

Dover had always been a borough of stainless virtue. Elections were fairly fought out, and parties were pretty equally divided. The balance of power generally lay with a body of men who were employed in the packet station, and it was partly to their votes Osborne owed his election. But, as upon former occasions, his hustings speeches were the main causes of his success. Such a reputation had he now secured as a hustings speaker that the Comte de Paris, who happened to be in London, and who had a great desire to witness a good English electoral contest, came down to Dover, and spent a day there, in order to hear and see Osborne's method of carrying a constituency. He was not disappointed. There was quite a *furor* in Dover about the new candidate. He refused to canvass, and relied on public meetings. At the nomination he gave a masterly sketch of the

political situation, and tickled his audience at the same time with his unfailing keenness of observation and repartee. One of his principal opponents was a Dr. Ottaway, who had seconded Mr. Hope at the nomination. He made a bitter attack upon Bernal Osborne, especially sneering at his jocular tendencies. He declared he never heard that Joe Miller made a good statesman. But Osborne had his revenge. In his speech he thus turned the tables on the sarcastic doctor :—

The gentleman who seconded Mr. G. W. Hope, and who so kindly likened my speech to the effusions of Joe Miller, that gentleman is not a homœopathic doctor ; he gave us a good dose, and if I were inclined to lay that able anatomist upon his own board, I would recommend him to stick to different operations and not endeavour to teach the electors of Dover what their political principles ought to be. I say it in perfectly good humour to that gentleman, who I suspect is more versed in the light literature of Joe Miller than the deeper subjects of the British Constitution ; and I would recommend that gentleman, who I am sure from his face never perpetrated a joke in his life, instead of talking of Joe Miller, to pay his attention to another book, 'Drelincourt on Death.' I would advise that gentleman before he comes into the arena again to get his speech better by heart and not trifle with edged tools, for a man may often cut himself with his own scalpel. But away with these mere local disputes—these harmless electioneering squibs, which no man pardons or delights in more than myself.

An amusing incident occurred during the nomination. The hustings were erected in the market-place, and at the commencement of Osborne's speech there was great and continued interruption from a party of roughs, who had taken up a position at the left of the platform. One of the Liberal committee was a

large employer of labour in a quarry on the cliffs above Dover, and he sent off a messenger, post-haste, to bring down a posse of navvies to keep order. In about ten minutes there arrived on the scene some fifty stalwart fellows, who filed through the crowd to the hustings ; then, fronting the roughs, they simply walked them out of the square, and kept them penned up in a bye-street until the meeting was over. The whole manœuvre was quite perfect in its strategic simplicity. Order was restored, and the meeting was satisfactorily concluded.

Osborne was returned at the head of the poll, and Sir W. Russell came next, with almost an equal number of votes. The Liberal-Conservatives were ignominiously defeated, and Osborne's prophetic parody of a line was realised :—

Hope trembling fled, and *Clerk* soon sighed farewell.

The general election resulted in a complete victory for Lord Palmerston, and accordingly Osborne returned to the Admiralty. During the recasting of the Administration it was positively announced that he would be transferred to the Irish Chief Secretaryship, which had been vacated by Mr. Horsman. A series of articles, offensive and defensive, appeared in the Irish Press,¹ as might well be expected, considering the

¹ The *Northern Whig* said :—'There was long a prejudice against Mr. Osborne, that he was too "smart" for "business." No man can dare to be brilliant without having his judgment impugned ; and, in House of Commons estimation, Mr. Osborne underwent the penalty of cleverness—being distrusted by the dull. We believe, however, that, in the office to which Lord Aberdeen called him, and in which Lord Palmerston continued him—that of Secretary to the Admiralty—he has displayed all that tact and temper which, behind the scenes, are so necessary to turn to account the talent manifested before the footlights of the House. We further believe that he has satisfied the great Parliamentary personages,

views Osborne had expressed on Ireland. There is no reason to suppose the post was offered to him, but he may well have shrunk from the 'grave' of so many political reputations.

At this period of his life Bernal Osborne was a conspicuous figure in London society, and during his residence at the Admiralty his house was the resort of a brilliant circle of friends and acquaintances. For it was not only in the House of Commons that the Secretary to the Admiralty shone. He was a welcome acquisition wherever wit and conversational talents were appreciated, and probably no public man was ever more sought after as a private guest.

An intimate friendship had long existed between him and Baron Lionel de Rothschild. It had been cemented by mutual esteem and many acts of kindness, and only terminated by the Baron's death; to be continued, however, between Osborne and the remainder of the Rothschild family. He was present on the occasion of the marriage of his friend's daughter, Leonora, to her cousin, Baron Alphonse de Rothschild, at Gunnersbury Park, and was asked to propose the toast of 'The Bridesmaids.' This task he accomplished in an amusing speech, which is an excellent specimen of his lighter oratory. He said :—

I am deputed to offer to your consideration a toast which claims it, not only upon its intrinsic merits, but for the largeness of the constituency I represent. Possibly it may be said that as I am not among them I am not entitled to represent

among other reasons that he has so rigorously self-suppressed himself—their pomposities not being partial to witty subordinates. But in the Irish Office Mr. Osborne would still more excel; for he has precisely the *bonhomie* and heartiness in which Mr. Horsman was ludicrously deficient. Besides all this, we should be disposed to regard Mr. Osborne's appointment as something like a guarantee that we were going to have some reforms in Ireland—reforms of the Castle inclusive.'

them ; but I had the honour to conduct two of them into this saloon, and it is to the amplitude of their dresses, and not to any desertion on my part, that I owe my banishment to this small borough—(great laughter, occasioned by its being observed that the hon. member was seated by himself at a small table in the centre of the room). However, I can truly say they have my sympathies. Their number is to me rather an ominous one—it is the number of sixteen. Faithful to my duty, and looking at these bright stars rather in the light of an astrologer than a prophet, I should say that they have well performed their duty in revolving round that constellation which I regret to say has become a fixed star. Before dinner we all saw the ceremony of breaking a wine-glass, and I have had a small piece as a memento presented to me. Might I be permitted to suggest that, in carrying out that feeling of *entente cordiale* which is so much prized in this country, sixteen other young gentlemen may be imported to break sixteen other glasses with my constituents. ‘The Bridesmaids’ is the toast I am about to give. I was almost going to say I was sorry I was not in a state of life to take one of them myself. But if I am not, I see many around who are willing and anxious to do so, and if any one should come forward I should be most happy to propose their health. On this occasion I will ask you to give it with three times three, and one cheer more for the ladies who expelled me.¹

Bernal Osborne’s official days were now fast coming to a close. On January 14, 1858, an incident occurred in Paris which altered the whole course of English politics. The attempt of Orsini to assassinate the Emperor Napoleon came like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. It produced the celebrated Walewski Despatch, which in its turn produced Lord Palmerston’s Conspiracy to Murder Bill, and upon this bill the Government, of which Osborne was a member, were defeated.

Lord Derby succeeded to office. Mr. Disraeli

¹ *Morning Post*, March 5, 1857.

became leader of the House of Commons, with, however, a party in the minority behind him, and the Liberals, divided into sections for the moment, only waited for a suitable opportunity to come together, and inflict such a defeat upon the Government as would necessitate an appeal to the country.

During the five years, 1853-58, that Bernal Osborne held office at the Admiralty he had made a fitful attempt to keep a journal in a small note-book. The few pages of manuscript which he penned are prefaced by the following quotation from the favourite piece of his favourite author, Burke on the French Revolution :—

A good patriot and a true politician always considers how he shall make the most of the existing materials of his country : a disposition to preserve and an ability to improve, taken together, would be my standard of a statesman.

There are only two entries in the diary for 1853 relating merely to official matters. On February 27, 1854, appears the following note :—‘ Dissented from the appointment of Sir Charles Napier to command of Baltic Fleet. No confidence in his judgment ; a theatrical sailor ; playing for Marylebone ; kept out of the scrape of attending the Reform festival to Sir C. Napier.’ This instance of Osborne’s penetration was amply confirmed by subsequent events.

Then comes March 1855 :—

Break up of Aberdeen Government. Retirement of Sir James Graham from Admiralty : as an administrator unrivalled ; as a statesman decided in manner, but irresolute in mind. As a chief, pleasant in the transaction of business ; in other respects unsound, though a really kind-hearted man. Lord Aberdeen emphatically an honest as well as able statesman. His cold manners concealed genuine good feeling. Misunderstood by his colleagues because he was superior to small intrigues.

There is no further entry until February 19, 1858, when Osborne wrote :—

Defeat of Lord Palmerston on Mr. Milner Gibson's amendment to Conspiracy Bill. Resignation of Ministers, and appointment of Lord Derby to office. Left the Admiralty without regret. Office of Secretary reduced to a head clerkship, registering minutes of the Board by day, and giving silent votes by night. . . . Lord Palmerston in some respects realized Hume's character of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. He had French levity combined with English familiarity; an adroit manager of men (and women); retarded a Reform Bill by shaking hands in the lobby with Radical representatives, and asking their wives to Saturday *soirées*; his Administration popular whilst he lived, his acts and memory entirely forgotten two months after his funeral. A great instance of the triumph of social manners. Spoke to every M.P. as if he knew his name and family. Contrast to Lord John Russell.

With the exception of one short note on the dissolution of Parliament in 1874, these remarks are the only private records left by Bernal Osborne of his opinions and experiences of the men of his day. They illustrate sufficiently his powers of observation and characterization to make us wish he had bequeathed more continuous personal literary remains to assist us in the present work.

No sooner was the Secretary to the Admiralty released from the cares of office and the trammels of a subordinate position than his voice once more sounded freely in debate. He was the first to insist upon a declaration of policy from Mr. Disraeli directly the Conservative party took their seat upon the Treasury Bench. One evening in March 1858 he gave notice that he would call the attention of the House to the circumstances under which the Tory

party came into power. He said he had long believed that Mr. Disraeli, if permitted to have his own way, was as good a Reformer and as advanced a Liberal as any in the House. 'If he can only get rid,' he continued, 'of three or four of his colleagues, the head of the Ministry included, and be allowed a little of his own way, he will meet with considerable support from the Liberal party. But I tell him he must weed out his own party.' The following Monday, therefore, Osborne carried out his threat, and it was in answer to the challenge that Disraeli made his well-remembered thrust at Osborne's official silence.

Nothing could be more characteristic than the calm, measured, but keen sarcasm of the Conservative leader on this occasion. Rising slowly, he said :—

Sir,—One of the advantages arising from the recent change in the Government is that some voices again sound within these walls which have for a long time been silent. I for one confess that when I listened on Friday to the wild shriek of liberty which proceeded from the hon. gentleman who has just spoken it was with no feeling of alarm or apprehension, but rather with one of anticipated pleasure. He will, however, permit me to observe that the weapon which he was wont to wield so effectively has become a little rusty. No doubt with sufficient practice it will resume the brightness which dazzled us of yore. I may be allowed to add by way of consolation to the hon. gentleman for his present position, that it is only while in Opposition he can find that practice which I can assure him it is absolutely necessary he should avail himself of before he can entirely regain that cunning of fence for which he was once celebrated.

Thus once more we find Osborne pitted in debate against the first man of the day in Parliament, and coming well out of the contest. Lord Palmerston paid a high tribute to the combatants when he rose to speak.

'In the passage of arms,' he said, 'between my right hon. friend and the right hon. gentleman opposite, the House must admit each knight had distinguished himself for the ability with which he had wielded his weapons—so much so, indeed, that it would be difficult to say which side had the advantage.' The time was not very far distant when Lord Palmerston was himself to feel the force of Osborne's arms, and appreciate the keen sarcastic vigour of his criticisms.

Amongst the numerous acquaintances that Bernal Osborne made in the House of Commons was Mr. Robert Lowe, who entered English political life as member for Kidderminster in 1852. A letter from Mr. Lowe towards the end of 1858 seems to have been called forth by an entreaty from Osborne, then in Ireland, to send him some political intelligence.

Caterham, near Reigate : November 14, 1858.

MY DEAR OSBORNE (or Asbiorn, as you ought to spell it),—I am afraid I cannot help you much, but will tell you what I know. Gladstone goes to the Ionian Islands to raise them, as he says, in the social scale, his view being that they are an oppressed and injured nationality. He went by the advice of that sage the Duke of Newcastle to prove that he was not unwilling to take a part in public affairs, which, after his twenty-nine speeches in one day on the Divorce Bill, nobody had any reason to doubt. Of course he is to advise the cession of five of the islands to our Cabinet, which seems to want as much advising as the Crown of which it is the adviser.

John's¹ visit to Knowsley had, as he says himself, no political meaning whatever ; he ought to know, and I for one believe him. Pam and Clarendon are going to Compiègne to see L. N., which we all very much dislike but cannot help. Pam says he goes because he cannot find any excuse for staying away. He used to be more ingenious once.

The Cabinet agree capitally—not a word of discussion,

¹ Lord John Russell.

A still growing impression that L. N. means to have a go at us.

General dread of John Bright, in which I do not share, except so far as his Reform Bill may do for the Government the same good office as John's Indian Resolutions. Rumours of quarrels between Lord Stanley and his Council. Things said not to be working smoothly. Lytton at open war with Hudson's Bay Company, consequently with the *Bear*, who sailed for England on November 7. The extraordinary style of this letter is to be explained by my having just read Carlyle's 'Friedrich.' I really know nothing more except what you can find out in the *Times*. I will send your letter to Delane, in hopes that he may take compassion on your sore need in respect of news. Remember me very kindly to your wife and daughters, and believe me always,

Very truly yours,

R. LOWE.

For some time previous Lord Palmerston's connexion with the Emperor Napoleon had become matter for grave political comment in England. It culminated in open complaint when, after his retirement from office upon the defeat on the Conspiracy Bill, he went with Lord Clarendon to Compiègne on a visit to the Emperor. It is evident that Mr. Lowe fulfilled his promise and sent on Osborne's letter to Mr. Delane, for we find a long letter from the Editor of the *Times* directed to Newtown soon after. Inclosed with it was a document which has an historical value, being, in fact, Lord Palmerston's own explanation of his conduct in a letter to Mr. Delane. This letter, which is an interesting instance of the enormous political power of the *Times* at that epoch, runs as follows :—

94 Piccadilly : November 10, 1858.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am told that you disapprove of the visit of Clarendon and myself to the Emperor at Compiègne, but it seemed to us impolite to avoid going thither.

The invitation was not sought for by us, and was to both of us very unwelcome. As for myself, I was comfortably settled at Broadlands, greatly enjoying the amusements, pursuits, and interesting occupations belonging to a country residence, free from the incessant interruptions by messengers and red boxes which for some years past have everywhere hunted me, and there is nothing which I less desired than to cross the Channel and leave home.

Moreover, I well know that the Emperor is much out of favour at present with the Liberal party, and that they will be far from well pleased at seeing us go to him. But then we felt that to refuse the invitation without some good and acceptable reason would be an incivility almost amounting to an affront. But good reasons we had none to give, except the true ones, which would have been anything but well taken. To tell a Sovereign that it was a bore to leave one's home to accept his hospitalities would be a rudeness not sanctioned by established usage; and to tell a Sovereign whom we wish to have as an ally that public men in England are afraid of going near him because he is so hated by the British nation, that anybody who accepts his invitation will fall under the ban of public censure, would not be a very good way of securing a good understanding between the two countries. If either Clarendon or I had been tied by the leg by gout, that would have been a sufficient excuse, but we are both known to be just now remarkably well. We therefore decided that it was better that we should face any additional abuse which our going might bring upon us personally than run the risk of producing upon the Emperor's mind an impression which would be injurious to the interests of this country, by souring the feelings of the Emperor, and by greatly cooling down that personal good-will which he now entertains for Clarendon and myself, and the maintenance of which is far from unimportant in its bearings upon the mutual relations of the two countries.

We may, moreover, have opportunities of speaking to the Emperor about some things with even more freedom than if we were in office, and I cannot but think that what both Clarendon and I urged upon him when last we saw him may

have led in some degree to the abandonment of the African slave trade operations, announced in his letter to Prince Jerome. But this is a matter of the utmost delicacy, and to speak of it would defeat our purpose. When a right course is taken it ought to be allowed to appear entirely spontaneous.

My dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

PALMERSTON.

J. Delane, Esq.

P.S.—Derby's speech last night is a very handsome enumeration of the good results of the measures of the late Government. The only good result mentioned by him which is not referable to some measure of ours is the abundant harvest, the produce of a singularly fine summer, and the merit of that may be left to be settled between Derby and the comet.

Mr. Delane's comments in his letter to Osborne, then in Ireland, upon Lord Palmerston's explanation are interesting :—

As to the suns (he said) of our late firmament, they are all obscured. Did any one ever hear of or imagine such folly as the visit of Palmerston and Clarendon to Compiègne? Not that it now makes much difference to either, but because people are out they need not bolt the door against their return. . . . I think you may safely recant your allegiance to these luminaries. No star shines very bright above the horizon, but these two seem to have hopelessly set. . . . In the meantime, except for the Ionian scrape, the Government has certainly not done ill. Everybody who has anything to do with them says that the work of all the departments is very well and quickly done. Panmure is not regretted at the War Office, nor, strange to say, C. Wood at the Admiralty. Malmesbury is at least not worse than Clarendon, nor Walpole than that god of Whig idolatry, Sir G. Grey. As to Diz., the revenue has been so productive as to bring him home in his very speculative finance, and I don't hear of his making any blunders.

One of Osborne's chief supporters at Dover was the Rev. T. B. W. Briggs, a Unitarian minister, and the proprietor of the *Dover Chronicle*. With him he kept up a political correspondence, and some letters written in the spring of 1859 give in a few graphic outlines the events which led to the dissolution of Parliament.

Mr. Disraeli had determined to bring in a Reform Bill, and the measure was before the country by March. It aroused a great deal of criticism from its curious character. First, the borough and county franchise was to be assimilated, both being placed at 10*l*. All sorts of property were then to be represented: holders of 10*l*. a year in the funds or bank stock, owners of 60*l*. in a savings' bank, pensioners in the naval, military, or civil services, clergymen, graduates of universities, doctors, and schoolmasters—all these were to have the franchise.

Writing early in March from the House of Commons, Osborne thus spoke of the situation:—

House of Commons: March 9, 1859.

DEAR SIR,—You will be glad to see that the House of Commons has just thrown out Mr. Walpole's Church Rate Bill, the numbers being—For, 174; against, 254. I shall be glad to learn what the constituency in general think of the new Reform Bill. Lord John Russell has given notice of his intention to oppose the second reading, but it is quite on the cards that Lord Derby will withdraw the disfranchising clause as regards the forty-shilling freeholders; indeed, some people think he will withdraw the bill altogether sooner than suffer a defeat. My own opinion is that it would take a great deal to persuade them to resign their places.

I am, very faithfully yours,

R. OSBORNE.

The debate on the Bill was well sustained. Osborne

spoke on the second night, and made a fierce attack upon the bill, which he thought contemptible. He objected to the exclusion of the mechanics and artisans from the franchise. His description of the novel franchise proposals of Mr. Disraeli was quoted for many years. 'Fancy franchises,' he said, 'are not the thing for the people of England. This is merely the political millinery of Downing Street. The lodger house franchise is only a delusion; it would be completely at the mercy of a smoky chimney or a scolding landlady.' But notwithstanding all his abuse of the bill, he had, as usual, a kind sentence for Mr. Disraeli. 'I give the greatest credit,' he declared, 'to the right hon. gentleman the leader of the House. I believe he is a man of great talents, and has a noble ambition. I think the democracy of this country have much to thank him for. He has had great difficulties to contend with, having an omnibus full of country gentlemen to pull up hill.' But he would have none of the bill. It was 'change without progress, and innovation without improvement.' Its various supporters he designated with neat strokes of satire. Mr. Horsman was a very 'dyspeptic politician.' Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, then Secretary to the Colonies, he attacked very bitterly. Putting his hands under his coat-tails and bending forward, as was his wont when about to say anything particularly cutting, Osborne said :—

I acknowledge the great abilities of the right hon. gentleman, but when he talks of the modification which has taken place in his opinions, I regret that while he rivals Burke in the splendour of his sentiments and eloquence of his periods, he goes far beyond that distinguished statesman in the facility with which he has deserted the principles of his early party life. The 'literary Whig' has become the Conservative philo-

sopher, and a Colonial Secretary is employed in denouncing the working classes he once so highly extolled.

The division proved fatal to the Government, and Osborne thus wrote to Mr. Briggs after the result was known :—

The Reform Club : April 1, 1859.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of your letter of yesterday's date. By this time the result of the division has reached Dover. As the House stands adjourned to Monday, we shall not be made acquainted with the intentions of the Ministry until then, but as they are making Peers it seems as if resignation was the order of the day. However, there are some who think a reconstruction of the Ministry may take place, with Mr. Gladstone instead of Disraeli. I much fear there will be great difficulty in reconciling Lords Palmerston and John Russell, neither being willing to succumb. In that case Lord Derby will hold on. At present it would be inconvenient for me to come down to Dover. Be so good as to apologise for my not coming on Monday. I will write further when I know more of what is likely to happen. Thirty-one Liberals voted last night with the Government, two Tories (Lord Hotham and Captain Grey) with us.

In haste, very faithfully yours,

R. OSBORNE.

A few days afterwards he wrote :—

House of Commons : April 4, 1859.

MY DEAR SIR,—My forebodings have been borne out. A dissolution takes place immediately. I fear Sir W. Russell will not arrive in time. Pray settle with our friends what is to be done. Sir W. Russell's relations have never made any communication to me as to his wishes at this crisis. Do you not think a public meeting would be desirable? I hold myself in readiness to attend if you and the constituency think fit to call a meeting.

In haste, yours truly,

R. OSBORNE.

Meanwhile the Conservatives were doing all they

could do to obtain a candidate strong enough to contest Dover with Bernal Osborne. He writes at the beginning of April to Mr. Briggs :—

The Reform Club : April 9, 1859.

MY DEAR SIR,—Sir William Hoste has declined to come forward for Dover. So also has Captain Mundy ; and Captain Carnegie has resigned his office of a Lord of the Admiralty sooner than be forced to come forward in opposition to me, as he did not approve of the Government Reform Bill. There are other resignations spoken of in the Admiralty, in consequence of the naval men being unwilling to stand contests for seats. I wish it to be known that I refused to come forward for Wolverhampton, where I should have had no contest, but preferred sticking to my friends at Dover. Matters abroad look most warlike, and may yet interfere with the elections. In haste, faithfully yours,

R. OSBORNE.

But nothing did interfere with the elections. Osborne might at the last moment have declined to contest his own constituency, and he would have been comfortably elected without opposition at Wolverhampton. But at the urgent request of his friends he came back to Dover, and so once more, and for the fifth time, stripped for the electoral battle.

CHAPTER XVII.

FIRST DEFEAT—DOVER, 1859.

IT was a strange irony of fate that when Reform became a burning question and the central point of political discussion at a general election, it should be, as it were, the signal for Osborne's first defeat. Brought up at the feet of Joseph Hume, whom he was accustomed to call his political godfather, the member for Dover had taken up the subject of Parliamentary Reform at the very threshold of his career. Upon it, indeed, he had, as we have seen, made his first reputation as a telling speaker and an advanced Radical. And yet when his favourite subject came within the 'range of practical politics' he was one of the first to lose his seat in the House.

Bernal Osborne was once more associated at Dover with Sir William Russell, who was with his regiment in India when the dissolution was announced. Travelling day and night, however, he was in time for the nomination. The Conservatives spared no pains to win both seats. As a counterbalance to Osborne's Admiralty qualifications, Admiral Sir Henry Leeke, K.C.B., K.H., one of the Lords of the Admiralty, was brought forward after numerous other candidates had refused. His colleague was Mr. William Nicol, a wealthy banker.

The circumstances under which Osborne's fifth con-

tested election took place created no small stir in the political world. Indeed, the Dover election was a scandal, which at the time greatly damaged the Conservative party. Osborne was in no fear of being excluded from the new Parliament, for he had been invited to stand for no less than three constituencies—viz. Marylebone, Wolverhampton, where there would have been no contest, and Tipperary. But a curious incident in connection with the Admiralty determined him to remain at his post and fight Dover against all comers. Sir John Pakington was First Lord of the Admiralty at the time of the dissolution of Parliament. He was anxious, in the event of a return to power, to avail himself of the services of the Hon. Captain Carnegie, a very able naval officer. Accordingly, that gentleman accepted office in the Admiralty, on the distinct understanding that he should obtain a seat in Parliament, and Dover was mentioned by Sir John Pakington as a 'fairly eligible' seat. The rest of the story is best told in Osborne's own words on the platform before his constituents :—

When last I stood before you, gentlemen, you will remember it was under somewhat different circumstances. Last week I had the impression that my seat was to be contested by a captain in the navy ; this week I have obtained promotion, for instead of a captain I have an admiral to contend against—and thereby hangs a tale which, I think, it becomes me on the present occasion to unfold. Let us, then, for a moment turn to a page in the naval history of this country. Last week we had it announced in large letters that Captain Carnegie, a Lord of the Admiralty, was coming down. If it was good for the electors of Dover once to have elected a Secretary to the Admiralty, how much better, it was said, was it that you should elect Captain Carnegie, who has been for some time a Lord of the Admiralty ! Captain

Carnegie was called, but echo answered 'Where?' He never made his appearance, and the eloquence of the two gentlemen who moved the invitation was exercised in vain. They might upon occasion 'call spirits from the vasty deep,' but they were utterly unable to evoke a naval spirit in the shape of Captain Carnegie, for he refused to make his appearance. And why? Captain Carnegie was sent for by the First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir John Pakington. And it is fair to tell you in the first instance that a more distinguished officer than Captain Carnegie does not exist in the British navy. Captain Carnegie is one of the new and rising school of officers who have studied steam; Captain Carnegie has distinguished himself in the Crimea; and Captain Carnegie was too well informed to endeavour to distinguish himself at Dover. However, he was sent for by the First Lord of the Admiralty. First Lords of the Admiralty formerly were men who attended to the duties of their office. A First Lord of the Admiralty's position entails on him great thought and responsibility, for it involves the entire management of the British navy. The Admiralty, it has always been supposed, is an office taken up with the consideration of the great naval affairs of this country; but what has it been turned to under the present Administration? A mere electioneering office to take away the liberties of sundry boroughs which are called 'fairly eligible seats.' Now what is the meaning of the term 'eligible seats,' found in the mouth of a Minister who wants to decrease his minority? It means nothing more than a seat where the Government can put on the 'screw,' and by intimidation and corruption send their own creatures into Parliament. You, gentlemen, had the distinguished honour of being ranked among the first of these 'fairly eligible seats.' What there is in the past history of Dover to entitle Sir John Pakington, as I told him to his face, to say it was a place to which any mere tool of a Minister could be sent to corrupt or intimidate, I know not. I know not on what such an insult was founded; but this I know, it has redoubled my determination to fight the battle of freedom in the borough of Dover, and I should feel infinitely prouder of being returned an independent member for this con-

stituency than to stand in the shoes of Sir H. Leeke, or even in the shoes of that great First Lord who has designated your borough a 'fairly eligible seat.' But to resume the story of Captain Carnegie. Captain Carnegie, it seems, sent down to Dover one of those private and confidential agents who abound in London at this time, and this agent went to various people in the town. No doubt he went to Mr. Knocker; and Mr. Knocker, who is at heart a very good and excellent man and animated by very kind feelings, doubtless told Captain Carnegie's agent to advise him to try elsewhere, and send down to Dover an admiral. Captain Carnegie took the hints conveyed to him by his agent like a sensible man, and when the matter was presented to him he entirely refused to have anything to do with the 'fairly eligible seat' of Dover. Warm words ensued between the First Lord and Captain Carnegie. 'How can you ask me,' said the Captain, 'to go to Dover, which is an independent place, with your Reform Bill tied round my neck?' That was a 'poser;' but it was got rid of in this way, 'Oh, throw the Reform Bill into the Channel;' where the Ministers, by the way, have already pitched it, and where, I hope, your votes and the votes of other constituencies will pitch them—for course I mean the moral Channel—for 'not all great Neptune's waters' could wash out that foul spot caused by their attempt to stigmatise this borough as corrupt and 'eligible.' Captain Carnegie totally refused to come; and this officer, remarkable for his science, assiduity, and industry at the Admiralty, was told that if he did not choose to contest this seat—this particular seat, mark, for Captain Carnegie had no objection to go to another—he might take his farewell of the Board. Captain Carnegie did what every Englishman would have done: he took his leave of the Admiralty; and I think the Admiralty lost an ornament when he quitted it. There can be no question as to the side on which the honour lay in this instance—Sir John Pakington's or Captain Carnegie's. Well, Sir, the matter became serious. Captain Carnegie having resigned, Sir William Hoste, a very distinguished naval officer, was sent for; and when I left town last week there was a rumour that Sir William Hoste was coming down that even-

ing, so that I half expected to see Sir William Hoste's name on the walls. On my return to London I found a gentleman, an admiral in the navy, who was waiting for me. He met me with excited gesture and serious countenance. 'Have you heard about the Admiralty?' he said. 'No,' I replied; 'have they been taken alive?' 'No, they have resigned,' replied my friend. And this was actually the fact. Directly Captain Carnegie declined to come to Dover, Sir William Hoste was sent for. Dover was put before him, but Sir William Hoste—a sensible man—declined. 'Oh,' said Sir John Pakington, 'you are certain of your seat there;' but Sir William Hoste replied very shortly, 'I wish you may get it;' in other words, he refused. Admiral Mundy, another distinguished officer, was then sent for. Now Admiral Mundy is an out-and-out Tory; his is none of your 'Liberal-Conservatives;' you know what he means. He refused. Sir Richard Dundas was then sent for. I know him intimately, and a better man does not live. He is a regular good old Tory in a quiet way, but he does not wish to go into Parliament. He was called on to come to Dover: this distinguished officer, who has been all his life occupied about naval affairs, who commanded the fleet in the Baltic on the last occasion of its being there, who was one of the most able men in the service, and whose whole time had been occupied in getting up the fleet, was told that he must come to Dover or resign his seat! Can there be anything more flagitious than for a great public department of this country like the Admiralty, when we are told we are on the eve of a war and that it is necessary we should have a powerful Channel fleet, to sink all these considerations and take its ablest men and threaten to turn them adrift because they will not fight an election contest? Has the Government of this country come to such a pass? Well, Sir Richard Dundas resigned. Admiral Bruce was then sent for; but whilst this was taking place the First Naval Lord of the Board (Admiral Martin), who was not asked to stand, felt so dissatisfied with the sort of people they were putting into the Admiralty that he resigned. Mark this, therefore, that on Friday, April 8, the Board of Admiralty consisted of Sir John Pakington, a civilian, who confesses

himself so ignorant of naval matters that he wants Sir Henry Leeke in the House to assist him, and the Hon. Mr. Lygon, a lay lord and one of the members for Tewkesbury ; and this on the eve of a war, when, we are told, our Channel fleet must be reconstructed ! As soon as a possibility of gaining Dover offered itself, away went all fear of war, away all thought of the Channel fleet ; Dover must be gained, let the fleet go where it might. The intimidation and corruption of the electors of Dover was the primary object ; the reconstruction of the fleet secondary to the possession of seats in Parliament. These, then, are the efforts that have been made to oust me from the representation of Dover.

Such were the curious circumstances under which Osborne came down to contest Dover for the second time. He had a strong case on paper, but, as it turned out, the Admiralty proved to have been well informed. The borough proved 'fairly eligible,' and the Conservatives won.

Bribery, however, was not the only engine used against Osborne. His opponents had handled with great effect some remarks he had made in the House of Commons as to the wages of dockyard labourers. He was misrepresented as having said that no dockyard labourer was worth more than 13s. a week ; whereas he had only declared the necessity of wages being regulated by the ordinary laws of supply and demand. But, all his contradictions notwithstanding, the whole dockyard and packet station interest was arrayed against him.

Bands of men paraded the streets singing the following ballad :—

BERNAL OSBORNE

OR,

THIRTEEN SHILLINGS A WEEK.

A SONG FOR THE WORKING MAN.

Air: 'The King of the Cannibal Islands.'

Poor dockyard labourers are we,
 All broken down as you may see,
 Reduced to this 'ere poverty
 By that there Bernal Osborne!
 His thirteen bob a week won't do,
 To keep ourselves and children too!
 So this advice we give to you,
 To turn out Bernal Osborne!

Chorus—His thirteen bob a week, &c.

You working men, don't heed his chaff,
 Nor of his crams believe the half,
 Or at you he will have the laugh,
 The cunning Bernal Osborne!
 He'll promise much but nothing do—
 Like all his precious Lib'ral crew,
 For thirteen bob are enough for you,
 Says grinning Bernal Osborne!

Chorus—But thirteen bob a week, &c.

'Tis hard when they have wealth galore,
 Some gents, instead of giving more,
 Should wish to screw and starve the poor,
 Like snarling Bernal Osborne!
 If he would only leave his club,
 And work like us to earn his grub,
 He'd find how little thirteen bob
 Would do for Bernal Osborne!

Chorus—For thirteen bob a week, &c.

The packet-station interest was very much under the influence of one or two men very hostile to Osborne, and the result was that Dover became the scene of a very bitter contest.

The nomination was held in the market-place. The streets showed plainly that the struggle for party ascendancy was to be of no ordinary character. It was an April day, and the sky was now bright and now dark. So great was the excitement that all thoughts of any processions with bands were forgotten, and the hustings were thronged by masses of people whose sole idea was to shout and cheer for their respective candidates. Osborne, as usual, had fought out the battle with energy and determination. He felt there was more to be gained than the mere seat, and his attacks upon the Conservative party had been bitter in the extreme. But there was on the other side an antidote to plain speaking, of which he had always refused to avail himself. When it first became obvious at the nomination that public feeling was in favour of the Tories, and the mob would not even listen to the man whom they had two years ago carried victoriously to the top of the poll, Osborne still kept his temper. It was not until his defeat was announced by the Mayor that he gave the rein to his tongue. In a short but very plain speech he told the Dover electors what he thought of the whole business. 'I do not hesitate to tell you,' he said, 'and it will come out hereafter, that the Liberal cause has been "hocussed." I see men with gold laurels in their hats, but what have they got in their pockets?' At this accusation there was a terrible uproar, and it was only by the extraordinary power of his voice and his strenuous determination to be heard, that he dominated the mob and continued :

‘ And so you are afraid to hear me when I am beaten ; you try to kick me when I am down ; I am not to be discouraged by a trifle ; you will find me a difficult one to beat. I do not envy the victory of my opponents. What is now the position of the borough of Dover ? The proverb says : “ Money makes the mare to go ; ” and money has made the honour of Dover to go. You are now a perquisite of the Admiralty. I don’t hesitate to say that wholesale bribery and intimidation has been carried on.’ Continuing in this strain for some time, Osborne at last concluded thus : ‘ I am now coming to a more agreeable task—to thank the electors for the attention they have given me under very exciting circumstances. It reminds me of the description of an Irish election, which concluded “ with a bonfire, a riot, and other demonstrations of enjoyment.” I wish you all good evening, and when you again catch me addressing you from these hustings, I hope you will not wear so many gold laurel-leaves in your hat.’

There can be no doubt that the defeated candidate felt the treatment he received most keenly. He had come forward on the urgent appeals of the Liberals of Dover, and had fought the seat on the absolutely pure principles which characterized the entire course of his political life. It took him some time to recover his spirits, but his first letter after the event to Mr. Briggs shows clearly what were his opinions as to the character of the victory of the Conservatives :—

The Reform Club : May 7, 1859.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am reminded by your admirable article in this day’s *Chronicle* that I have not yet written to you my sincere thanks for your late exertions. Had all the electors acted on your principles, Dover would not be in its present position. I heartily trust there may yet be an

exposure of the shameless proceedings of some of our adversaries. This alone would console me for the loss of the seat. Pray convey my warm thanks to your excellent father, and believe me,

Very faithfully yours,

R. OSBORNE.

N.B.—There is no truth in any of the reports circulated as to my starting for various places in Ireland. I had the offer of two seats there, but declined to be a party to any contest with candidates of my own political sentiments. For the present I am content to remain out of Parliament.

Rev. T. B. W. Briggs.

It was after the excitement of this election, in the pleasant month of September, that Bernal Osborne entertained the Duc d'Aumale at Newtown Anner. The Count Jarnac thus wrote announcing the fact :—

Thomastown : September 15, 1859.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—I will not fail to forward your letter to the Duc d'Aumale, which will show him that the date he has fixed for his visit to you will be convenient to yourself and to Mrs. Osborne. We understand that their Royal Highnesses will be accompanied by their eldest son, the Prince de Condé, one maid and two men servants.

Madame de Jarnac is writing to Mrs. Osborne to explain our reasons for not having it in our power to accept your kind invitation on this occasion. J——, who is with us, desires his best remembrance. He wishes me to add that, were he not leaving us immediately, he would have taken an opportunity of looking you up. With kindest remembrance to Mrs. Osborne, believe me most truly yours,

JARNAC:

CHAPTER XVIII.

LISKEARD, 1859—65.

OSBORNE had not long to wait before he was once again installed at St. Stephen's. He was far too much of a Parliamentary figure to be left out in the cold for more than a few months, and accordingly an invitation soon came to re-enter public life from the borough of Liskeard. A note to Mr. Briggs thus announces the fact :—

Liskeard : August 18, 1859.

DEAR SIR,—You will be glad to hear that my return for this borough is secure. Nomination takes place to-morrow. I have seen the Dover *Telegraph* containing a letter from Mr. Churchward of the nature to be expected from such a quarter. Of course I shall not take any notice of his misrepresentations.

Faithfully yours,

R. OSBORNE.

P.S.—Regards to all my friends.

Bernal Osborne was now settled at the commencement of a new Parliament in what was generally considered a safe seat. Lord Palmerston had formed a Government, which was destined to last with more or less strength almost until his death. Office, Osborne had never sought ; now it was not offered him, and the member for Liskeard was again free to play the part of all others most delightful to him—that of an independent member and candid friend of a Whig Government.

Twelve years before, Osborne, as we have shown, had, in conjunction with Mr. Roebuck and Mr. Hume, formed a sort of a Radical cave below the gangway for the express purpose of attacking Lord John Russell's Ministry. He now commenced a guerilla warfare of a somewhat similar character against the policy of Lord Palmerston's Government. When Lord Palmerston came into power in 1859, the state of political parties was somewhat anomalous. Things were in a state of transition. Mr. Gladstone, first a Tory, then a Peelite, and afterwards a member of Lord Aberdeen's Coalition Government, now formally threw in his lot with the Liberal party and became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord John Russell was at the Foreign Office, Sir G. C. Lewis was Home Secretary, the Duke of Newcastle, Colonial Secretary, Sir Charles Wood was Secretary for India, and Mr. Cardwell, Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland—Lord Carlisle; while Lord Campbell, Lord Granville, the Duke of Argyll, the Duke of Newcastle, Mr. Sidney Herbert, and the Duke of Somerset, all found seats in the Cabinet.

In Lord Palmerston the English people as a whole reposed the most unbounded confidence. His foreign policy, his *Civis Romanus sum* attitude, as we have seen, had ten years before brought the whole of England at his feet. At the present juncture of affairs the Tories had little reason to complain of the policy of the Government, for Lord Palmerston was quite as heedless of the necessity of a Reform Bill as they were themselves, and his attitude towards the Emperor of the French was as characteristic of a John Bull of 1815 as the most ardent Protectionist could desire. One of the great questions of the day was the fortifications

necessary to defend the country from a threatened French invasion. From the outset Osborne opposed the proposal. Lord Palmerston commenced his new administration by a vote of two millions, and seven more millions were to be voted for the defence of our coasts. In fact, the two items of retrenchment and reform were at once banished from the banner of Liberalism, and peace itself was in continual jeopardy in the hands of the spirited Foreign Office of Lord Palmerston's Government.

This was, at all events, the view taken by Bernal Osborne and the advanced Liberal section of the policy of Lord Palmerston, and for five years he never ceased exposing what were considered the blunders, the contradictions, and the un-Liberal principles of the Administration. Upon the question of Reform, Osborne had always been an advanced thinker. His description in a speech at Liskeard of the state of the question during the Easter recess of 1860 is very characteristic :—

At this moment (he said) the question of Reform is in a peculiarly awkward position. The great rival politicians are terrified at their own work and—

Back recoil, they knew not why,
Scared at the sounds themselves have made.

There is a sort of lull in the matter, and each wants to get rid of the question, but they do not know how. Reasons may be given for this. The question has been made by both Whigs and Tories a stepping-stone to office. The Conservatives declare for Reform. That pushes on the Whigs, and compels them to be Whigs and something more. The two parties differ, but there is no difference in one thing: each desires to be the coachman to drive the State coach, and the consequence is that the poor unfortunate vehicle—the Constitution—is jostled

and hustled about by the rivalry of these men, who have every sort of scheme to get into power.

It was this plain way of saying out what everyone was thinking that gained Osborne the ear of the public and the press. His speeches were always looked for and read. In them was sure to be found the current talk of men expressed in pointed, terse, epigrammatic sentences, flying straight to the mark, while facts were clearly put, cynically perhaps, but plainly and in clear homely diction.

Lord John Russell brought in his Reform Bill next session, but it was withdrawn with the excuse that it was 'not a favourable opportunity.' 'We must wait,' said Lord John, 'for a breeze to carry a Reform Bill over the bar of the House of Lords;' to which Osborne retorted, 'Let the noble lord beware that while indulging in the nautical amusement of whistling for a wind he does not invoke a hurricane. Do not wait for a row out of doors,' he continued; 'the people are prepared to accept a moderate, not an excessive, measure, because they are tired of seeing the game of cup and ball played with the Reform question.'

France and the fortifications were the principal topics of discussion towards the end of the session of 1860. Bernal Osborne spoke frequently in the House against the schemes of national defence, which he declared were fragmentary and unnecessary, while the estimates of outlay were loose and inaccurate. Lord Palmerston, he said, was inaugurating a policy of suspicion, and he deprecated the national fear of France, which he believed to be needless and absurd. The navy he believed to be the proper defence of England. 'Do not,' he said on one occasion, 'do not let the energies of the country be wasted on bricks and mortar

when we ought to be looking to the real defence of the country, to its iron navy.'

Next session, while continuing his criticisms upon the army estimates in a still more pungent strain, Osborne had a collision with Palmerston. He talked contemptuously of the 'great Aldershot job,' which he said was 'an indifferent preparatory school for forming indifferent generals.' Lord Palmerston was considerably nettled, and did not spare Osborne in reply. He remarked upon the fondness of sweeping assertions which the member for Liskeard displayed, who, he remarked, had at his command a most ample vocabulary of strong words: 'Everything he disapproves of is a "job," and everything he does not like is absurd, ridiculous, foolish, and preposterous.' The old statesman was very brisk in his defence of his favourite fortifications, and denounced Osborne's expressions of opinion as 'light and violent.'

The matter did not end here. The House was in committee, and so Osborne returned to the charge. 'At the risk,' he said, 'of disturbing the equanimity of the noble lord at the head of the Government, who, from the tone of the remarks he addressed to the House, appears to be suffering from indigestion of the dinner at the Mansion House, I think the explanation offered by the Under-Secretary for War evasive and unsatisfactory. . . . I make every allowance,' he concluded, 'for the irritation of the noble lord, who is no doubt suffering from the effect of large doses of colchicum.'

Lord Palmerston at once rose, seeing the mistake Osborne had made. 'I am very sorry,' he said blandly, 'that what I have said should have disturbed the equanimity of my hon. friend. I am certainly inclined

to prescribe for him a dose of that very colchicum to which he has alluded, reminding him at the same time that colchicum is rather sedative than exciting in its operations.'

This was not the only occasion on which Lord Palmerston successfully parried Osborne's sarcasms, and inflicted a deep thrust in return. The opportunity arose a few weeks after the last-mentioned incident.

The vote, as before, had to do with Aldershot Camp, which Osborne again condemned, declaring it to be a monument of extravagance. Mr. Baring, the Under-Secretary of War, reminded Osborne that he had supported a similar vote when in office. Osborne retorted, and excused himself as having been 'a subordinate member of the Government,' and Mr. Baring should bear in mind that 'sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.' Lord Palmerston at once rose and said that Osborne had excited his deepest compassion:—

He has most pathetically described (continued the Prime Minister) the extreme sufferings he endured when he was in office, and was called upon to assent to the vote for Aldershot. It is a lamentable thing that he should have undergone so much pain; but, on the other hand, it is some consolation to know that in his present position he has fully indemnified himself for his former privations. The free expression of opinion in which he indulged this evening can be compared with nothing but the thawing of Baron Munchausen's horn, when all those notes, whether harmonious or discordant, which have been frozen up so long at length found vent in the open air, and either astonished or delighted the audience by whom they were heard.

Those who play bowls must expect rubbers, and the laugh for the moment turned against Osborne. He was on his legs again at once:—

It has been my misfortune, Sir (he said), to-night to fall

foul of two Irish gentlemen. I think, however, it is a little unfair in the noble lord to fire off at my expense the old jest about Baron Munchausen's horn, which, for the benefit of younger members of the House, I may state I heard him six years ago apply to another member.

In Mr. Hayward's essay on 'The British Parliament : its History and Eloquence' this episode is alluded to. 'Lord Palmerston had humour of the genial give and take kind, which for a party leader is often more serviceable than wit. He was told that Mr. Osborne, a popular speaker, whose dash and sparkle are enhanced by good feeling and sagacity, regretted a personal conflict which he had provoked. "Tell him," said Lord Palmerston, "that I am not in the least offended, and the more particularly because I think I had the best of it."'

Parliament rose, and the member for Liskeard at once sought his constituency, and there continued his criticisms. On the platform Osborne was invincible. He invariably carried his audience along with him, and on this occasion he interested and delighted his constituents with a rapid, caustic, and yet amusing review of the session. He repeated his objections to a spirited foreign policy, which necessitated an increase of twenty millions in the national expenditure. His defence of the Emperor of the French was bold and almost unique at the time. He declared that Napoleon had evinced a desire to put the relations of the two countries on a new footing, and performed an act of special favour to this country by the abolition of passports. The commercial code, too, the Emperor had effected in spite of the French Protectionists. As for the increase of military expenditure, he denounced it as a game of 'beggar my neighbour.'

The Whigs came in for a large share of banter.

They were a 'charmed circle.' Young followers of Whig principles were as difficult to find in the first instance and as hard to bring up as an infant gorilla. They acted very much like those Eastern potentates who in default of issue introduced the principle of adoption. The Whigs not being fortunate in having political issue, had adopted the Peelites. But what had often happened in the East? Those who had been adopted supersede the original race. 'I am sure of this,' said the speaker: 'Mr. Gladstone, who is the Grand Vizier, will stand no rivalry near the Throne, be he Whig, Radical, or Peelite. I do not find fault with him. He is a Government statesman, worthy to lead the reform in expenditure, which I believe he will do if backed up by the country.'

Then he proceeded to make fun of the Prime Minister and the reconstruction of the Ministry consequent upon Lord John Russell's elevation to the Upper House:

The Prime Minister (he said) is no doubt a wonderful man. He came under the idea of the poet,

'He frolics with the burden of four-score.'

I may say that Lord Palmerston, in a Cabinet the united ages of which would puzzle the oldest inhabitant, is certainly the youngest man, and the fault I find with him is not his age, but his youth. He has a turn for extravagance, which is a folly of youth. He is never satisfied without he is squandering the public money.

Lord Palmerston did not forget these little pleasantries. But Osborne's taste of the discomfort of official silence seems to have determined him never to accept a subordinate Government office again, and his open and undisguised opinions as to the texture of Lord Palmerston's Liberalism probably excluded even the possibility of his being offered any position of the first rank.

Independent in his political opinions from first to last, Osborne never lost an opportunity of avowing his antipathy to the idea that a member of Parliament was merely to be considered the delegate of his constituency. In his first speech at Liskeard after he took his seat for that borough he took great pains to make this perfectly clear. 'I am proud,' he said, 'to be your representative, but I should be most reprehensible if I were anything more than your representative. Although I am your representative, I could not, even with the smiles of the electresses I see before me, consent to be made your delegate.' At various periods of his political life, and especially on public platforms, Bernal Osborne frequently reiterated this principle, and it was part of his political creed down to the last days of his life.

The French press acknowledged the frank manner in which he spoke of the Emperor of the French,¹ and the following letter from De Persigny showed the appreciation of Osborne's sentiments by Bonapartists :—

Albert Gate : August 3, 1860.

MY DEAR MR. OSBORNE,—Allow me to congratulate you on your excellent speech of yesterday and to assure you of my deepest sympathy.

¹ The 'Moniteur' in commenting on the speech recently delivered by Mr. Osborne at Liskeard, observed :—'Mr. Osborne has apprehended with perfect justice the reasons which ought to dissipate the unjust suspicions sought to be propagated on the other side of the Channel with regard to France. He has spoken in the most sensible terms of the acts of the Emperor of the French, of the treaty of commerce with England, of the suppression of the passport system to the advantage of British subjects, as well as of other striking evidences of the Emperor's desire to draw closer the bonds of peace between the two countries. The name of Richard Cobden, to which he appealed, in conclusion, must have still further increased the favourable impression which he produced upon his audience ; for no one represents better than Mr. Cobden, on its positive and practical side, the English temperament, which is unwilling to abandon the substance for the shadow.'

England can spend her money as she thinks proper ; let her coasts bristle with fortifications and defences. So much the better for her if it satisfies her ; but, as the Emperor says, it is giving us very little credit for common sense to suppose we have any thought of wishing to attack England, in other words to expose ourselves willingly to a conflict in which we should have all to lose and nothing to gain.

Thousand compliments for your excellent speech, and thousand sympathies for yourself.

Yours sincerely,

DE PERSIGNY.

In 1861 Sir Robert Peel was Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He had always been a warm friend of Bernal Osborne, and on several occasions was a guest at Newtown Anner. Another friend was Mr. Brewster, afterwards Lord Chancellor of Ireland, a letter from whom in this year is interesting, showing as it does the intimate relations that had existed between Sir James Graham and his former subordinate at the Admiralty :—

Merrion Square, Dublin : November 2, 1861.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—Power told me last night that you intend coming to Dublin next week. Will you stay any time here ? I want you to dine with us, and should like to ask Sir Robert and Lady Emily Peel to meet you, which I will do if you will only tell me what day I have a chance of you.

I left our friend Sir James Graham only last Tuesday. His family hoped he might and would pull through, and so did I, but with great misgivings. He insisted on bidding me farewell in the sense of a final parting, but this was after much conversation about affairs and more about men. I am sure it will gratify you to know that he spoke of you in terms of the highest friendship, and more than once stated that you ought to be what I trust you will yet be.

Believe me to be, most faithfully yours,

A. BREWSTER.

In 1862 and 1863 Osborne's attention in Parliament was a good deal devoted to the criticism of the votes in supply in accordance with his principle of national economy. Now and then he flashed out with some funny speech which convulsed the House with laughter. There was a sum of money proposed to be devoted to the enlargement of the British Museum.

Are you aware, sir (said Osborne, addressing the Speaker in tones of mock gravity) that Professor Owen's plans extend to the building of a hall 850 feet long, for the reception of whales, of which there are no less than fifteen species? He also advocates the preparation of apartments for every variety of elephant. [Of course the House roared with laughter.] This is no joking matter, he continued. Let not the House be led away by that most questionable of all matters—a matter of taste. Let them beware of the member for Pontefract (Mr. Monckton Milnes) when talking, in a manner which shows a contempt for economy, of Darwin's 'Origin of Species,' and everything but the real topic for consideration.

What brought Sir Visto's ill-got wealth to waste?

Some demon

(In the shape of a Chancellor of the Exchequer)

whispered Visto have a taste.

England next year was intently watching the struggle in America between the North and the South. The country was deeply moved by the Trent affair, and Mr. Roebuck, Osborne's old fellow freelance, made a bitter attack upon the North, in a speech in the House. From the commencement of the war Osborne had counselled non-intervention and moderation. He took Roebuck sternly to task for his speech.

In proportion (he said) as we are treading on the living ashes of a war we are bound to be the more careful of the language we use. If at such a time as this we are to go on

reviewing American institutions, inflaming the American Government and casting out taunts, I do not see how any Government can prevent our being plunged into a war.

Later on in the war he alluded to the Polish and the American struggle in some very fine passages of a great speech at Liskeard.¹ He said :—

It is very much to our interference in this Polish question that I trace all the evils that have lately arisen. The Government proposed six points to Russia—a sort of Russian Reform Bill—and no doubt it was very consoling to some people, that, as there was to be no Reform Bill for England, one was proposed for Russia. In July 19, 1863, there was great excitement in the House of Commons. Articles had appeared in the papers, and it was supposed that we were really going to be mad enough and foolish enough to go to war for Poland. Meetings were held in London in support of it, and were attended by people whose cry was ‘Liberty to Poland and death to Russia,’ and who did not have any anticipations of having to pay a 10 per cent. income-tax. Of course, they were excellent points to propose if you had an army at your back and intended business; but what business had you to excite those men to revolt, as they were by this means making themselves obnoxious to Russia, and then quietly to say you meant nothing, and cover yourselves with confusion when you had plunged Poland into blood? I will say that this policy is a policy which makes this country ridiculous, and adds misery to all the unfortunate people who are led away by this foolish, this unmeaning, this criminal swagger. That is my opinion on the Polish question. Then why did Lord Palmerston hold one language to America and another to Russia? What so foolish and so wrong as his interference with Poland; what so wise and so right as his conduct with regard to America?

Then he went on—

I refrain from giving any opinion on this struggle in

¹ October 21, 1864, *Western Daily Mercury*.

America. I say we are pursuing a right course ; we have no business to interfere. That war is to be lamented for the sake of our common humanity. That war is to be lamented, but at the same time, as Englishmen, we cannot help taking a pride in those people on both sides—both North and South—who are showing this indomitable perseverance, this magnificent gallantry, for they are descended from ourselves. We must feel a pride in them. The stake with them is great. If the Southern States are separated from the North, the greatness of America is set for ever. Therefore, it is a great struggle. I can fully understand, I can fully enter into the feeling. I give no opinion as to the results ; still less would I attempt to be such a fool as to predict what the close is likely to be. But looking at it as a sensible man ; looking at the circumstances of the North, its wealth, its capabilities, and its financial position, I cannot help thinking that, however long the contest may be, it must be like two gladiators in the arena, where, science being equal, the weight will tell. I believe that the North will eventually make a solitude and call it peace. What will follow afterwards it is not for me to predict. It is for us to stand by and be as little offensive to either party in our expressions as we can. Therefore, if I decry the conduct of the Government in its interference in Poland, I give them every credit for the neutral attitude they have assumed with regard to America.

We have already stated very fully how it was that Bernal Osborne first became interested in the question of the Irish Church—how he made the subject his own, and was consulted and considered as the great authority upon its history and position. Once more in June 1863 he brought the question before the House of Commons, but the time was not yet ripe for its solution, and it was reserved for other hands to bring to the earth the Established Church of Ireland. But Osborne was the pioneer of the movement which culminated in the Bill of 1869. His speeches contained the whole subject, prepared and digested with enormous study

and attention, and however he may have differed from Mr. Gladstone in his scheme of treatment, the volume of public opinion upon the subject was largely due to its persistent and able ventilation in Parliament for twenty years by Bernal Osborne. In this last great speech he declared he did not contemplate the destruction or the upsetting of the Irish Church. 'I do not wish,' he said, 'to uproot that establishment or confiscate its funds. As a political institution the Church of Ireland is a blunder, and as a national religion it is a fraud, though, I am ready to admit, of a pious description.'

During these years of active public life Osborne was in correspondence with some interesting public men. He had made the acquaintance of Charles Dickens one evening early in the season of 1862 at Lady Molesworth's house, and, judging from the following letters, the writer and the wit must have struck a chord of sympathy.

16 Hyde Park Gate South : Sunday, May 18, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR,—Are you fortunately disengaged for Monday the 26th? And if so, will you dine with me and my daughters at the Star and Garter at Richmond that day at 6 punctually? We have really no party, and we dine there because I 'detest, abominate, and abjure' this corner.

I go back to my own Falstaff House on June 1, and as it is but an hour's railway ride, I am not without hope of enticing you there one fine day.

You see that I am as good as my word at Lady Molesworth's, and that I don't mean to let you pass out of view easily. Pray be as good as *your* word too,

Faithfully yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

Bernal Osborne, Esq.

Gad's Hill Place, Higham by Rochester, Kent :
Wednesday night, July 16, 1862.

DEAR BERNAL OSBORNE,—I have been in Paris, and

went away at short notice. Before going, I asked my daughter to write to you, and remind you that you had said you would come down here at some odd time.

(You see that I remember our compact at Lady Molesworth's.)

As I cannot quite make out from my said daughter whether she made, or even attempted to make, the case clear to you, I send you this note to state it. I came back only last night.

From this time until next Wednesday, I shall be here. From next Wednesday until the following Saturday evening I shall be away. If you should have any leisure—and inclination—to make us a visit, this is an expansive little house and a comfortable one, and we can give you a country bedroom, and a hearty welcome. Higham station is little more than an hour from London Bridge, and I will meet you at it whenever you can come. Observe once more—I am here until Wednesday—away until the Saturday afterwards—after that here again. Believe me,

Faithfully yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

The following letter from Mr. Kinglake on the political situation at the commencement of 1863 is also interesting :—

Wilton House, Taunton : January 3, 1863.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—I cannot sufficiently thank you for your kindness about Mrs. Tully. I shall have a great deal of gratitude from the important constituent who moved me in the matter, and this I shall owe to your friendly help.

I don't at all see my way to what is to be the course of politics in the coming session. The Tories are in rather an animated state, intending mischief, but not (so one of them told me) for the beginning of the session.

My good-will towards Palmerston is founded entirely upon the notion that he is undoing as well as he can the mischief that he did by some thirty years of bad (though strenuous) foreign policy, and that Dizzy is in a state of perpetual *kotow* to

the French Emperor. If the Government had nothing but their Italian policy to recommend them, I should set little value on their existence. What you so pithily put as 'United Kingdom,' rather than 'United Italy' is just what I, in my more roundabout way, have long tried to compass. It seems to me that Dizzy is the man who spoils all wholesome strife of politics, for that shiftiness of his prevents the proper play of party, and obliges the honest Conservatives to take 'the old sinner' Palmerston for their real chief.

I agree in what I take to be your view—namely, that the men who have for some years had the wielding of great affairs have had much too high an opinion of their own capacity for carrying on State transactions, and I imagine that an impression to that effect will be more or less produced by the two volumes of my long-threatened book which are to appear next Thursday week, the 15th of this month.

I suppose I shall be much attacked upon the old charge of 'lowering confidence in public men,' but I have not done the thing in an ill-natured way, and it is from the nature of the story, rather than from comments of mine, that people will be driven to a repetition of the *Quantula sapientia regitur mundus*. Always, my dear Osborne,

Most truly yours,

A. W. KINGLAKE.

One of Osborne's visitors at Newtown Anner in 1863 was Mr. Justice Keogh, the Irish judge who in later years became so well known by his celebrated judgment in a Galway election petition. Mr. Keogh had in early life been an advanced Nationalist, and knew Irish affairs intimately. Whilst at Newtown Anner, at the request of his host he wrote a short memorandum upon the state of Ireland, and its remarkable appositeness to the present situation suggests its publication, though evidently not written for that purpose :—

MEMORANDUM.

I have often thought that in Sir John Davis' great tract nearly, though not quite, everything (for he omits to speak of the state ecclesiastical) necessary to render Ireland a united and contented member of the Empire could be found. But now British statesmen think it no longer necessary to inquire about the state of Ireland. I admit that so long as we are at peace, and the world moves smoothly, this, though neither politic nor just, may be safely done. But if again the rude whirlwind should rise, I am sorry to say I do not believe our condition in Ireland to be at all satisfactory. You recollect, in the summer, I said to you, in opposition to the opinion of our friend, that if the harvest was good the emigration would be large. Was it not so? I do not look upon this emigration in the abstract as an evil. Quite the contrary. *But in our present position* it is productive of evil or rather aggravates existing evils. It rankles in the minds of those who are left behind, as a grievance for which Government is responsible. The spiritual advisers of the people see the sources of income flying from them, whilst those who remain are compelled, and I say very reluctantly, to bear the burden of a heavy and constantly increasing taxation in the effort to make up the loss. But this is a subject which I am told no British Minister dares to handle. And yet it occurs to me that it could be now more calmly considered than at a time when our attention might be engaged with a French fleet at their old anchorage in Bantry Bay or with some thousands of Yankee filibusters on our shores, or with both together, and an Indian mutiny into the bargain. There are other matters which I could mention, and, as I think, not unworthy of consideration. When in office, Lord Derby's Government gave a subsidy to the Galway Packet Company. It may have been well meant, I do not say it was, but although I am Galway born, I have no hesitation in saying it was ill-directed. Much money, public and private, has been spent, and will be spent, upon that undertaking. Yet it will certainly be a total failure, and the worst of it is that, when it has failed, the Irishman, who is both by nature and

convictions the most suspicious of mortals, will attribute the failure to British jealousy and governmental management. But if you had given to the country at large an image of your power by establishing amongst us one of those naval ports or great marine arsenals, where so much of the expenditure of the country to which it largely contributes takes place, they would soon, for they are ready learners, find out the practical advantages of British connexion. Again, you are apt in England to think us all here radical democrats. Nothing is less true. The Irishman likes an aristocracy and likes a king. But he has but a scanty and poor representative of the former. And the latter he only gets a passing glimpse at once or twice in half a century. It is certainly unreasonable, if not illogical, to expect an Irishman to be devotedly loyal to a sovereign whom he never sees, and whom he only knows through that mock royalty at Dublin which every part of Ireland, except Dublin, would abolish to-morrow. I happen to know that the French Emperor has honoured several districts in Ireland with his attention, and with gifts presented to the Roman Catholic priests on one pretext or another, but of their own sovereign these know nothing, except in the manner I have described. Pardon these dull thoughts suggested by Sir John Davis.

It was on the occasion of Judge Keogh's visit that Osborne made an amusing remark in answer to a query of one of his English guests. This gentleman had noticed several trees, in the demesne near the house, which were whitewashed, a practice in vogue where young horses were accustomed to range, to prevent their indulging in any crib-biting propensities. Asking what was the object of white-washing the trees, Osborne quickly replied, with great gravity, that in Tipperary landlords always did so, as a white-washed tree offered much less cover to an assassin.

CHAPTER XIX.

SPEECHES ON DENMARK, 1864.

IN the year 1863 England became deeply agitated upon the subject of Denmark. We do not propose to go into the long and most intricate story of the Schleswig-Holstein Duchies. A few words must suffice to sketch the political situation and the circumstances which led up to the great debates in Parliament in 1864, during which Bernal Osborne reached the climax of his oratorical powers.

The Treaty of London in 1852 was supposed to support the integrity of Denmark, and settle for ever the 'balance of power' in Europe. That treaty had provided for the Danish succession, but the whole question had been re-opened, and it was evident Germany, under the influence of Bismarck, was determined to enforce her own policy at the edge of the sword. At the close of 1863 Prince Christian, of Glücksburg, the father of the Princess of Wales, ascended the throne of Denmark. Contrary, however, to the express stipulations given twelve years before, he proclaimed the incorporation of Schleswig with the kingdom of Denmark, and the result was an immediate collision between Denmark and Germany. After some diplomatic parleying, war was declared, and the unequal struggle commenced.

England was attacked at once with the war fever.

The marriage of the Princess of Wales early in the year, the extraordinary impression she had made by her simple grace and beauty upon the hearts of the people, the natural inclination of Englishmen to help a small, plucky power, standing up against an adversary treble its size; all these considerations excited the sentiment of the British public. Not much trouble was taken to understand the rights and the wrongs of the case, but there was a very strong and general feeling that England was in honour bound to go to war to protect Denmark. The Danes most certainly expected our assistance. Both Lord Russell and Lord Palmerston had used words in public documents and in their places in Parliament, which were fairly enough construed into an informal guarantee, and the English Press spoke of the situation in such a way that between the rising of Parliament in 1863 and the commencement of the Session it was very generally believed that England would side with Denmark were she plunged into war with Germany. This state of mind impelled Denmark to refuse the terms offered by Germany, and accordingly war was declared.

When Parliament assembled in February 1864, the Danish Question held the first place in public interest. In the debate on the address from the Throne both Houses dealt largely with the war in Denmark. We have already seen upon what intimate terms were Bernal Osborne and Mr. Kinglake. They had been at Cambridge together in early days, had subsequently kept up a correspondence, and now a certain community of interests and opinion brought them into close connexion in the political world. From the commencement of the Danish Question they had acted in unison, making every effort to turn the tide of popular feeling

into a more reasonable channel. Both were strongly against any intervention in the Danish imbroglio, but on different grounds. Osborne's reasons were partly economical, but also largely based upon his general objections to English intervention in foreign politics. His strong objection to what he called the wholesale meddling of Lord Palmerston in foreign affairs lay at the root of his opposition in the present instance. Mr. Kinglake, on the other hand, was most anxious that England should not throw herself into the scale against Germany. He saw in the united action of the Germanic Diet a forecast of coming greatness, the preliminary canter to the great race for empire, which Herr von Bismarck was then meditating. This was the main motive of Mr. Kinglake's action in this crisis, and as an acknowledged authority upon foreign affairs at that period his attitude was matter of public interest and comment. Around him and Bernal Osborne were gathered a very small party holding similar views, though actuated by different motives, but so insignificant a force were they considered early in the year that Lord R. Cecil¹ spoke of them contemptuously in public as a group of men that 'I can count on the fingers of my two hands.' Mr. Kinglake spoke strongly in the debate on the address against the idea which was prevalent, that the Treaty of 1852 should be upheld on the part of England by force of arms. So cogent were his arguments and criticisms, that it is said, when the member for Bridgewater sat down, a member of the Cabinet, not in the House of Commons, who was seated next a colleague under the gallery listening to the debate, exclaimed, 'There goes the Treaty of London!'

At the end of February the tide began to turn.

¹ Now the Marquis of Salisbury.

There was considerable dissatisfaction at the withholding of the Parliamentary paper on the subject. Mr. Disraeli raised the question one evening on supply. Osborne took the strongest step perhaps possible for a supporter of the Government; he made a hostile motion without any notice, and proposed to postpone the Navy votes for three weeks, unless the Government would at once declare what their policy with regard to Denmark was to be. At last the papers were circulated, appearing one by one, as Osborne described it, like the novel of *Sir Charles Grandison*. Then the Government said they were in hopes of settling the Danish Question by means of a Conference in London. Osborne, however, was very anxious that the whole question should be discussed in Parliament at the very earliest moment, and he had long since placed a resolution on the paper calling attention to the affairs of Denmark. But Lord Palmerston made an appeal to the member for Liskeard to postpone the discussion, and so the subject was staved off until after Easter.

Then came the news of the bombardment of Sonderborg, and another short debate in the House. This was early in April. Mr. Dillwyn spoke in a somewhat warlike manner and talked of the necessity of sending the British fleet to the Baltic. Osborne said he hoped the House would be calm and not be led away by the 'raw head and bloody bones statement' of Mr. Dillwyn. Then he proceeded to cut up the idea of a conference. It was nothing more nor less than a means of escape for her Majesty's Ministers from their bungling proceedings and uncalled-for meddling in the North of Europe. It was in fact a political picnic given by Lord Palmerston, to which every country would be allowed to bring its basket of suggestions, with no *pièce de*

résistance provided in the shape of a basis, but with perfect freedom, and indeed agreement, on the part of each one present to differ upon every point from everybody else. There was no likelihood in the present state of feeling between the Powers of their coming to an agreement at such a Conference, even though Lord Palmerston's anxiety to get them into one room, like the Kilkenny cats, was gratified. Instead of meeting on April 12, the Conference ought to meet on the 1st. In this strain Osborne went on bantering and chaffing until the House was fairly exhausted with laughing. Lord Palmerston followed at once and in defending the attitude of the Government took occasion to declare that Osborne could not have read a word of the blue-books—an observation of which Osborne took due note at the time.

On the eve of the Conference, within a few hours of its first meeting, Bernal Osborne brought the whole question of Denmark before the House of Commons. He had accepted the challenge of Lord Palmerston and had been hard at work in the Library of the Reform Club for ten days reading all the blue-books and papers on the subject.

The House was full, as it always was when Osborne was known to be about to make a set speech. There were great expectations of a pleasant hour with the member for Liskeard, whose unfailing liveliness came like an oasis in the desert of an ordinary debate. But on this occasion his audience were doomed to disappointment. Bernal Osborne had determined to abjure the lively and assume the severe. He was anxious to show the country that if the object of the Conference was merely to patch up the Treaty of London, it would infallibly end in failure, and to do this

completely he was obliged to go into the dry details of foreign politics. His speech occupied nearly five columns of the *Times*,¹ relieved by but few of his smart sayings. But his exposition of the whole Danish Question was admirable, and to any one desiring to learn the historical origin of the difficulty it is a perfect mine of information. Extract after extract from Parliamentary papers was quoted. Now and then he raised a laugh, as when he alluded to the numerous despatches of Lord Palmerston. 'I, for one, grant,' he said, 'from the beginning the excellent intentions of the noble lord at the head of the Government; but I regret that he has been so incessant in writing despatches, for it must be evident to every one who has waded through this mass of papers in order to find the substratum on which our foreign policy is based, that by that foreign policy somehow or other this country

¹ 'There could be but one fate for the motion of Mr. Osborne on the affairs of Denmark last night. His theories were equally unpalatable to the Government, which has befriended Denmark peacefully, and the Opposition, which has half intimated its desire for sterner measures. His censures were directed against a treaty signed by the Foreign Secretary of Lord Derby and now supported by the Government of Lord Derby's opponents. If Mr. Osborne is right, then Lord Palmerston is in the wrong; but Mr. Disraeli and his friends are still more in the wrong. No wonder, then, that it was unanimously agreed that his motion should not be put, so that the Conference will commence its sittings to-day without any opinions having been expressed by the House of Commons against the weaker party in the present war. Last night the House of Commons heard a recapitulation of the arguments which have been familiar for some years to the few students of foreign politics, and which have been more generally made known by the discussions of the last five months. Mr. Osborne repeats with perfect accuracy all that the Germans have advanced on the subject, and the most learned patriots in the Frankfort Diet could not expect an Englishman to be more completely acquainted with their own side of the question. When we say further that Mr. Osborne spoke, as usual, admirably, and that his information was laid before the House with all the advantages of oratory, it may be taken for granted that the German case has not suffered for want of an advocate in England.'—*Times*, April 20, 1864.

has lost the ear of Europe ; that we are looked upon by the minor Powers as troublesome meddlers, and that the greater Powers regard us as an incorrigible bore. No one after reading these papers can help asking in his own mind whether they were intended to confuse or instruct. I will not go through them at length, because what has been so well typified in a despatch of the noble earl, the Foreign Secretary (Earl Russell), has come to pass. I allude to a passage which is to be found in volume 4,542, page 436. You must be particular in volume and page when making quotations from these papers, or you will be told that you have not read them at all. And if I bore the House as much as the noble earl bored Germany it is in consequence of the noble lord at the head of the Government telling me I had not read the papers. I will give him enough of them, and show him I can be as dull and well-informed as any other member of this House.'

The House did not resent this in the least. What it did resent was that their favourite speaker, at the sound of whose voice every seat filled, should appear in an entirely new character, and enact the part of the serious man. For the first time, perhaps, in his career he lost touch of his audience. Some members spoke to each other in an undertone. Others left the House. In fact, the speech of all others, perhaps, in which Osborne was most correct, most sagacious, and most in earnest, failed to bring him the applause he coveted. That he felt this bitterly is well known, and he frequently alluded to it with an air of injury, which showed how deeply his failure to impress the House had wounded him. For, like all people, but especially those endowed with a keen sensibility, Osborne loved

to be appreciated. On the present occasion he knew he was intrinsically at his best, and was still apparently impotent to impress his hearers. The slight upon his ability was, therefore, the more severe. Those who understood the Danish Question recognised that Bernal Osborne, as far as thought, ability, and expression could go, had reached in this speech the zenith of his intellectual power. But he had long since impressed upon the House of Commons his individuality as a wit, and, unable to appreciate the many-sided nature of the man, they refused to listen to him unless he continued the *rôle* which, fortunately or unfortunately, he had from the first undertaken.

The debate was concluded by Mr. Disraeli, who moved the previous question. For the moment the subject dropped, but events proved that Osborne was right.

Determined to continue the subject in every possible way, the member for Liskeard bethought him of his old knack of rhyming. There was at that time running in London, with all the popular success of a novelty, a little paper called the *Owl*. Its own private history is interesting.

Three friends interested and engaged in political life went down to dine one evening at the Crystal Palace. Overflowing, as it happened, with bright talk, repartee, and pointed criticism of passing events, so many good things (it seemed to them) were said that they declared it would be a sacrifice of wit and humour to hide them for ever under a bushel.

‘Why not put them in the *Morning Post*?’ asked one.

‘Impossible,’ replied another, authoritatively.

‘Then let us print something on our own account,’ said the third.

The thing was done, and thus it was that Algernon Borthwick, then editor of the *Morning Post*, Evelyn Ashley, and James Stuart Wortley came to start the *Owl*. The first number came out on a single sheet, and consisted of a few smart political sayings, squibs in verse, and general chit-chat. It was published in a little insignificant shop in Catherine Street with the prohibitive price of sixpence, the object of the promoters really being to sell as few copies to the general public as possible. Accordingly it was sent privately in the first instance, as a matter of fact, to the names on the visiting list of a well-known leader of society in London. To the great amusement and satisfaction of the authors, the *Owl* was the topic of conversation throughout the drawing rooms of London on the night of its first issue. A second number appeared. Catherine Street was thronged with the carriages of the Upper Ten Thousand, who came to buy this 'new thing' in journalism with an avidity surprising to all, but to none so much as the original triumvirate. They were at first amazed at the effect of their idea. Then, seeing how it could be developed, they went ahead. Mr. Laurence Oliphant became a leading spirit on the paper. The *Owl* circle was enlarged, and men of all shades of politics became contributors. A dinner was started every Monday, at which the *Owl* letter-box was opened, and its contents read aloud by Mr. Borthwick, and then criticised, condemned, altered, amended, or rejected by those present. The paper was a financial success. Money poured in, and the staff spent it royally. There was no certainty about the publication of the paper. If the writers wanted to go anywhere, they went, and the *Owl* did not appear. The public took it all as a kind of an aristocratic literary

eccentricity, and were delighted to buy it whenever it appeared. The political news was of the best description. Indeed, the *Times* was glad to reproduce its first page of intelligence, which was picked up by men moving in the highest political circles, intimately acquainted with the lights and shades of diplomacy and Parliamentary life. Such was the *Owl*, the political plaything of a small but cultivated clique of men of the world, and to its columns Osborne sent the following verses on the Danish Conference:—

A SONG OF THE CONFERENCE.

DEDICATED WITHOUT PERMISSION TO COUNT BISMARCK.

(To the tune of *The Great Plenipotentiary*.)

EARL RUSSELL of late, in alarm for its fate,
When Jutland was mulcted and undone,
¹ Declared in the Lords, with very 'brave words,'
'He'd stand by the Treaty of London!'

So, by day and by night, he continued to write
² Threat'ning letters or lachrymose sermons:
Should this *Treaty*³ so fam'd be a *Protocol* named,
No terms must be held with the Germans.

Layard talk'd loud and big 'gainst the rights of Slesvig,
And bluster'd—but that's an old story.
⁴ '*Denmark shan't stand alone*,' quoth my Lord Palmerston,
Still he left her 'alone in her glory.'

¹ See Debate, February 5, 1864.

² Five Blue Books! containing 1,215 despatches! identic notes! &c., have been already published.

³ 'I have to instruct you, whenever any official person makes use of the term "*London Protocol*," as designating the *Treaty* of 1852, to interrupt the speaker and correct him'!!!—See *Extract, Earl Russell to Sir A. Malet*, Vol. 4, No. 486, *Danish Papers*.

⁴ See Hansard, July 29, 1863.

In those books, to the view so dreary and blue,
 Of the truth we may sometimes glean snatches :
 ' Wily Drouyn de Lhuys, 'twill be seen, kept the peace,
 And ridiculed Cowley's despatches.

In the mansion of Pam all the Cabinet cram—
 Cardwell ! Gladstone ! with Gibson the wary !
 Earl Russell would speak, but his French was too weak
 For a Great Plenipotentiary !

So they search'd through the town for a Peer of renown,
 A linguist, but no rhetorician ;
 Yet all will confess, at a recent Con-gress,¹
 He spoke like a native Parisian !

Soon Clarendon came, to assist at the game,
 Nor dreaming of place, or of pence, Sir,
 And not being touchy, accepted the Duchy,²
 With a seat at the great Conference, Sir !

There behold them all met, a Noah's-Ark-looking set !
 A medley of minds and of races ;
 See Krieger ! with Quaade ! von Beust ! and a squad
 Of Germans in search of a basis ?

At the phrase *Plébiscite* ⁴ mild Apponyi took fright ;
 Whilst Bernstorff look'd glum at the benches ;
 And poor Clarendon found himself sat upon
 By that Prince ⁵ who the pride of the French is.

¹ See No. 843, Vol. 5, *Danish Papers*.

² At the Congress in Paris of April 1856, Lord Clarendon spoke with the purest accent, and French feeling of the true Imperial type, in favour of curbing the Belgian Press !—See *Protocol of Congress*, 1856.

³ His lordship's acceptance of the Duchy of Lancaster, after *refusing*, or being refused, the Foreign Office, can only be paralleled by the celebrated *descent* of M. Curtius into that ugly hole in the Roman Forum. Of Curtius nothing has been heard since—*absit omen* !

⁴ See French Despatch, March 20, 1864.

⁵ The Prince La Tour d'Auvergne, formerly the First Grenadier of the First Empire. At present, Last Ambassador of the Third.—*Owl*, June 15, 1864.

For at last it appears, whatever Pam swears,
There 's an end of the Treaty of London ;
So Cecil and Co. will be able to show
How Denmark 's dismember'd and undone !

Lord Palmerston's Conference ended in smoke. The Danes refused a compromise, and the armistice which had been arranged during the London deliberations, expired, and for a short space Denmark fought on. Then came the inevitable surrender, and Austria and Prussia were left to quarrel over the prey.

Meanwhile the whole policy of Lord Palmerston's Government in the matter was about to be brought to the bar of public opinion ; this time not by a small knot of independent Liberals, but by the leader of the Opposition. On July 4 Mr. Disraeli himself moved a vote of censure on the Government. Osborne did not speak until the fourth night of the debate. He had moved the adjournment of the House, and was therefore in possession of an audience worthy of the occasion. Everything conspired to incite the speaker to make a great effort. On the last occasion that he had addressed the House his grave predictions and serious words had met with a chill reception. Now all was changed. His prophecies had been verified by events, and he could have his revenge, secure in the knowledge that his audience would be at his feet.

Who has not seen and felt the magnetic influence of a crowded meeting of the House of Commons ? The pulse of political life beats high inside and outside the chamber on such an occasion as this. The lobbies are full and the hum of voices is loud and eager. What are the chances of the division ? Will the Government be beaten ? How will this man vote ? Will that other walk out of the House ? The whips on

each side, straining every nerve for the final struggle, hurry to and fro, book and pencil in hand. On this occasion Bernal Osborne was the central figure of the sitting. It was pretty well known that he would not spare his foes, and when he rose at about five o'clock to resume the debate he was greeted with loud cheers. 'Osborne's up! Osborne's up!' was the exclamation in the outer lobby, followed by a rush to the bar of the House of those members who were not fortunate enough to obtain seats at prayers.

No man ever possessed a finer voice for oratorical purposes than Osborne. Those who remember it say it had a marvellous resonance, an inspiring tone, which seemed by its cheery loudness to carry both the speaker and his audience swiftly along upon the current of his own thoughts. Men used to say that often in minor debates, when members sat in the numerous ante-rooms or lobbies adjoining the House, the sound of Osborne's voice penetrated there, and so surely as it did the House began to fill.

On this occasion the House was made, and made according to his liking. The galleries were crowded above and the benches were thronged below, and from his coign of vantage on the corner seat of the second bench below the gangway Osborne delivered a speech which was a curious pendant to his former grave effort. Full of information and facts as he always was, to-day he was brimming over with the spirit of irony. Disraeli once called him the 'Chartered libertine of debate,' never did he more thoroughly prove the truth of the phrase than in this rattling survey of the Danish Question and the policy of the Government.

Hitting off first a few personal peculiarities of

various members, Osborne soon had the House in a broad grin. Mr. Whalley, whose anti-Jesuit mania is still remembered, was 'evidently under the idea that the object of the amendment of Mr. Newdegate, which he had supported, was not to preserve Denmark, but to protect England from some aggression on the part of Cardinal Wiseman.' Then Lord R. Cecil was in accord with Mr. Bright, and Righteousness and Peace had kissed each other. The Conference had met. There was only one thing on which they were unanimous; but when they did agree their unanimity was wonderful. They agreed to a vote of thanks to Lord Russell, and they said 'they left England with the most pleasant recollections.' The House of course roared. Then, putting one hand as was his wont under his coat tail when he had made a good point, Osborne continued: 'The Conference was assembled to preserve the integrity of Denmark; it separated, having decreed its dismemberment. The Conference was assembled to maintain the treaty of 1852 intact; it declared its abrogation. The noble lord, the President of the Conference and the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was the person who moved for the dismemberment of Denmark, and he was the President who assented to the destruction of the Treaty. No doubt he did so with great coyness and with some reluctance. Indeed, I am reminded by his conduct very much of Donna Julia, of whom it is said, as the House will recollect:

'A little still she strove and much repented,
Then vowing "I will ne'er consent," consented.'

A slight incident during his speech gives a very good instance of the way in which, by some sudden

sally, Osborne would defeat an interruption. He had made some statement of fact from which Mr. Layard was understood to dissent. 'I maintain what I say,' retorted Osborne. 'I really don't know how to meet the hon. gentleman.' Then after an artistic pause he bent forward and said, 'Will he leave office if he is wrong?' Then twiddling his hat round on the seat beside him, an unconscious gesture or habit he had contracted when in any momentary difficulty of debate, he proceeded with his speech.

The interest of his audience never flagged, and his bright piquant wit, tossing its darts here and there, nipping and teasing his adversaries, flashing, striking, and vanishing like lightning, seemed an inexhaustible fund of merriment. His peroration was a terrible attack upon the policy and composition of the Liberal party:—

Members ask 'What is your policy? What would you do?' I will tell you. The noble lord and the gentlemen on the Treasury Bench are men of great capacity, but a little past their time, and they bungle a little, but if they wish to put the country in a proper position with foreign Powers, and restore the just influence of England, it might be easily done by their imitating that custom which is obligatory on unsuccessful officials in Japan. If, sir, they would enact, in a modified form, that 'happy despatch' which we have learnt from the Asiatics, I am sure this country would at once regain its proper position. It would be a subject of regret among themselves and their families for a short time, but it would have the effect of setting matters right. That, Sir, is my policy, but I am afraid they will not take that advice. There sits the noble lord. *Sedet æternumque sedebit.* I was about to add, but it would not be true—*infelix*. But there is another question. What is the position of what is jokingly called the Liberal party? That is the *nom de guerre*—there is no such thing. But that is between ourselves. We all

know that here. There are people out of the House who imagine when we go to the hustings with all our fine professions that we mean it, and that we shall stand by our colours in this House. Well, as an election is near, what is the position of the Liberal party? The old Liberal cries are rather the worse for wear. They used to be something like 'Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform.' Now, as to one of these questions, peace, it is delightful to see how we are all agreed—even the noble lord the member for Stamford (Lord R. Cecil) is for peace. We are all for peace, and occasionally we all nibble at retrenchment. ('No, no' from some hon. members below the gangway.) Oh, yes; but only occasionally. But on both sides of the House we do not want Reform. Well, Sir, that is the end of peace, retrenchment, and reform. But what is the position of the Liberal party? The hon. member for Sheffield,¹ who has no preference, but only dislikes one more than another, and curiously enough he dislikes the people among whom he sits more than anybody else, has instituted a comparison between the two benches. I have always been of opinion that there are as good fish in the sea as ever were caught, and if this Government were thrown out, that such a terrible loss might be replaced. Now, let us see how this Ministry is constituted. Well, I will take first the noble lord the First Minister, and I wish to speak of him with every respect, because I believe that a more active or a more able man never existed in this country. It is said of him that

'Panting time toils after him in vain.'

He is certainly *facile princeps*, the liveliest, if not the youngest, on the Treasury Bench. The noble lord deserves great credit for his admirable management through so long a time of the affairs of this House. He has acted with all sorts of men, and agreed with all sorts of opinions. He has contrived a most extraordinary feat. He has contrived to conciliate both the Low Church party and the High Tories. The *Record* acknowledges his inspiration, and the hon. gentleman the member for North Warwickshire² bows to his influence. These are great feats, but what is his policy? Sir, his domestic

¹ Mr. Roebuck, M.P.

² Mr. Newdegate, M.P.

policy, not to go beyond the line of debate, is paternal but stationary ; his foreign policy up to this day has been pugnacious but progressive. But now, Sir, he is about to achieve the most wonderful feat of his life—he is about to go to the country as the apostle and minister of peace and will be supported by my hon. friend the member for Birmingham.¹ Now, that is the most extraordinary feat of all. I have not been unfair to the noble lord ; but now let us go into his Cabinet. His Cabinet is a museum of curiosities. There, Sir, are to be found some birds of rare and noble plumage, both alive and stuffed. But, unfortunately, there is a difficulty in keeping up the breed. For those Whig birds have been very barren, and they were obliged lately to take a cross with the famous Peelite breed. I do them the justice to say, however, that there is a very great and able minister among them in the shape of a Chancellor of the Exchequer,² and it is to his measures alone that they owe the little popularity and the little support which they get from this Liberal party. Certainly it cannot be said, either by their enemies or friends, that they have been prolific of measures since they have taken office. Even my right hon. friend (Mr. M. Gibson), who is not connected with them by family, and somehow got into the Cabinet—but, like the fly in amber, ‘one wonders how the devil he got there’—has not been fertile. I must say that his hon. friends the members for Rochdale and Birmingham are, I think, disappointed in ‘this young man from the country.’ When he married into the family we expected some Liberal measures, but the right hon. gentleman has become indolent, and almost quarrelsome, under the guidance of the noble lord. Well, Sir, what is to be done? We know by the traditions of the great Whig party that they will cling to the vessel, if not like shipwrecked sailors, like those testaceous marine animals, which somehow adhere to the bottom, thereby clogging the engines and impeding the progress. Sir, should a vote of this House displace that Administration, what are the Liberal party to do? Well, my advice to them is that they may feel perfectly happy as to the issue of this great duel which is being fought. They are somewhat in the situ-

¹ Mr. Bright, M.P.

² Rt. Hon. H. E. Gladstone.

ation of Iago in the play, and may say like him, 'Whether Cassio kills Roderigo or Roderigo kills Cassio, or each kills the other,' they must gain. No, Sir, even should this Parliament decide on terminating its own and their existence, they will find some consolation in the knowledge that the funeral oration will be pronounced by the hon. member for North Warwickshire, and that some friendly hand will inscribe on their mausoleum—'Rest, and be thankful.'

When Osborne sat down there arose a perfect storm of cheers. Every one began to move about and talk, and there was so much confusion and noise that it was several minutes before the next speaker, Mr. Whiteside, was even heard. The division was very close. Mr. Kinglake had put an amendment upon the paper, the effect of which was to tie the hands of the Government and render certain the non-intervention of England; and accepting this, Lord Palmerston, after making what was his last great effort of oratory, gained a majority of eighteen in a House of 608.

Osborne himself did not vote. His abstention was marked by the Government whips, and not forgotten. The cheers which rang still in his ears as he walked home cost him dear. Not many weeks elapsed before he found out the penalties of being independent. He had created a tremendous sensation in the Liberal ranks by his attack upon the party, and it was not long before sundry letters from his constituency warned him that he would be summoned at the end of the session to give an account of his stewardship. But the speech with which he reached the climax of his Parliamentary reputation was a marvellous success. Nothing else was talked of at the clubs, and the circumstances which ultimately arose out of it must be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER XX.

IN TROUBLE AT LISKEARD.

DURING the few weeks that remained of the session after the Danish debate, Bernal Osborne heard and read a great deal of public criticism upon his political conduct. Brooks's Club condemned it. The Treasury whips looked askance at him. The Whigs treated him more or less as a traitor. But he himself was not accustomed to trouble himself much about partisan recriminations. He believed that his services to the Liberal party and his position in the House of Commons justified him in forming independent opinions, and in giving them frank expression. He maintained *he* had been faithful to the principles of his party, while *they* had broken their pledges. If by exposing the shortcomings of the Administration, and sarcastically twitting them upon their abandonment of their principles, he had earned a good deal of ill-will and hostility, at all events he was prepared to defend himself before his constituency.

Indeed, he travelled down for this purpose to Liskeard at the end of October. It was not because Bernal Osborne's constituents were indifferent, but because they were so few, that his audience was restricted to less than three hundred people. The rain and wind of a truly Cornish gale did not prevent the Liskeard politicians from filling the largest room they

had at their disposal. Their representative spoke for two hours, and his speech was a masterpiece of tact and address.

A man who is able to do the right thing at the right time, stopping short when the work is complete, deserves a good deal of credit. How much more credit is due to him if he does the right thing when a difficulty stares him in the face, which threatens if clumsily handled to bring him loss of fame and character and place. All this Osborne did at Liskeard. Innocently adroit, effectively humorous, airy, discursive, and apt, his speech was exactly suited to the occasion. He had to contend against that exceedingly embarrassing fact that he had made the most damaging speech against the Liberal Ministry, when its very existence was at stake. Moreover, he had not only attacked the Administration with all the force of his oratory, but had withheld his party vote when the fortunes of the Ministry lay in the balance of a division.

All these were difficult matters to deal with, especially as we may assume that his audience had already made up their minds that the member for Liskeard had gravely forfeited their confidence by the conduct he had pursued in the Danish debate.

But Osborne had confidence in himself. He knew he possessed the resources necessary to meet the difficulty, and simply by the arrangement of his speech, by its cheery *déagé* tone, and the unstudied candid way in which he made the audience as it were his political confidant, he managed to send them home to bed with the conviction for the time that his onslaught on the Government was not only justifiable, but that his absence from the division was a triumph of Parliamentary principle.

Indeed, Bernal Osborne's speech was a model of platform oratory. Adopting for his own purpose the Pestalozzian principle of proceeding from the known to the obscure he first of all engaged the minds of his constituents and got them into good temper over pleasant and less compromising subjects. He commenced with local topics and extra-parliamentary events, poked fun at the British Association and the Bristol Church Congress, and so created a pleasant diversion in his own favour. Gradually, after reviewing public events, he brought his hearers to the consideration of the special difficulty, the claims of personal consistency over political loyalty.

Well (he said) I have drawn your attention to the Danish debate, but I am now coming to the division. You will remember there was a very large division upon that occasion, and that I did not vote in it. I am told that my conduct created the greatest astonishment. I have been told that there are strong supporters of the Ministry by whom a member if he does not eat his full peck of dirt in the Session—and I certainly refused to eat my full peck of dirt—is called a bad supporter of the Government. They tell me you have lost your confidence in me, and I am here to ask whether that is so. I could not vote for what I thought was a lie, for such I deemed the statement that the Government has conducted these Danish negotiations successfully. I could not vote for the Government after the speech I had made; I thought it would look like putting my tail between my legs. It would have been said, 'Osborne roars like any sucking dove, but see how he votes.' I could not have voted for the Opposition, for they had no policy. If they had come before the House with a distinctive policy, if they had fought the Government on the principle of non-intervention and reduction, I would have separated myself from your party and voted with them. They did not do so. There are very few cases in which not voting can be excused; but I

felt I could not vote after the speech I had made, and so I gallantly walked away. I am here to ask what objections you have to the course I adopted. . . .

I know it will be said, as it always is upon these occasions, 'Look at Mr. Osborne ; he is letting in the Tories.' Letting in the Tories, poor innocent individuals ! I want to know where they would be, gentlemen, if that great Pagan philosopher Diogenes, whom some of you may be acquainted with, were to go into the impure and inflammable atmosphere of the House of Commons with Sir Humphrey Davy's patent safety-lamp and to hold it up to endeavour to discover the Tory party. He might after some difficulty find three men all of them most honest and excellent men. He would, I think, light upon the hon. member for North Warwickshire—Mr. Newdegate—and the philosopher would say, 'How are you, Newdegate ?' He would next pitch upon the hon. member for Norfolk—Mr. Bentinck. Then, if he held his patent safety-lamp high enough to perceive him, he would point to the noble lord the member for Tiverton as the third.¹ (Hear, hear.) Those are really the only three Tories that I know of in the House of Commons. . . .

I daresay, gentlemen, in reading the newspapers, you have read the speech made at the agricultural meeting of Bucks by the Right Hon. Benjamin Disraeli to a class of poor farmers, who knew nothing—not even their own business or calling. This gentleman, in his speech, discoursed upon breeding and upon crosses in sheep. He says and recommends that the South Down ewe being crossed with the Cotswold ram would have a remarkable benefit upon the breed, and improve the flesh and also the wool. Well, I cannot help thinking that this kind of talk has been indulged in of late by both sides of the House ; but it appears to me that there has in the last Parliament been a very great cry of legislative measures, but very little legislative wool has resulted from them. I cannot say that the Cotswold breed is very improving, but I can say that very liberal sentiments come from the other side of the House. . . .

There can be no doubt that the Government, with the exception of Mr. Gladstone, are not engaged in promulgating

¹ Lord Palmerston.

any liberal principles, but are pursuing a course by which they are deceiving themselves and the people. They have been guilty of a military manœuvre of taking a peculiar kind of step—I do not mean the goose step—but the step of marking time, by which the military are in the habit of moving their feet, but still not going on. That is just what the Prime Minister was guilty of, and he is generally in the habit of preferring this step, pretending that he is moving in a very quick manner, whereas he is still standing still. I know that the Premier is a very popular man, and that the people applaud him. I don't dispute it, but I think that there should be some of the power taken from one class and given to another. This country is an aristocratic country, and I believe the people like it all the better for it ; but I do say that there are many members of the Cabinet who hold high places in the Ministerial Board, and who are selected more for their high connexion than their fitness for the office ; for, if it rested with this latter qualification they would be reduced to blow the bellows of their parish organ. I will tell you an anecdote which recurs to my mind, and which is illustrative of the conduct, generally and latterly, of the present Government. We are told that we have the best Ministry that ever existed, but all I can say is that if they are able they are indolent, for they do not produce anything. This reminds me of the story of the man—a great ornithologist—who advertised that he had got the cleverest parrot in the world and that he would sell it to a buyer for 500*l*. And this is like the policy of the Government, and their liberal sentiment—the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill. This bird began to create a most sensible excitement, and it was sold—not to the Kensington Museum, for it was not in existence at the time ; but I believe if it had, it would have been eagerly purchased by it, but it was sold to a respectable old lady who gave the required 500*l*. for the bird. She kept it for a season, but still it did not talk a single word, and if she had kept it for a hundred years it would not have by that time uttered anything. She kept it for about a year and yet it had not spoken anything. About this time she met the man, the famous ornithologist and the former owner of the bird, and asked him

the reason that it had not spoken, at the same time expressing surprise at it, when he answered 'No; but it's a devil to think.' I think that is very much the case with the domestic policy of the Ministry. . . .

Then advertng to his own personal conduct he said :—

If it is the wish of my constituents that I am to be a dummy, never to raise my voice, never to have the liberty by communication or action of voting, I should advise them to get somebody else to do their bidding. I am proud to represent you, but I should not be so proud as I am if I had not been sent to Parliament by you as a free and unfettered member of Parliament, not obliged to register a compulsory vote, nor give way to official influence or be actuated by ministerial blandishments.

I have no fault to find with Lord Palmerston for the course he has pursued. The country goes with him in doing nothing. He has been in office all his life. In the course of my reading the other day I came upon some extraordinary lines upon his grandfather, or father, which shows that the noble Lord belongs to a family that was noted for being in office for life. They are of so curious a nature that I think you would like to hear them read. There is no doubt that he is a tenant for life. These lines were written in 1742, and were on the first Viscount Palmerston, who was appointed Remembrancer of Ireland for life :—

One stanza more and I have done,
Heav'n long preserve Lord Palmerston ;
And, since for life he's in,
We must like other sinners stay
Till death, or his, or yours shall pay
The wages of your sin.

If it is your will that he should be a tenant I shall do nothing to gainsay it, but assuredly I cannot vote that black is white when I know it is quite different, and I cannot be reduced to a situation of a mere delegate under the present system of things. . . . I am not one of those individuals who have ever pleaded sentiments for universal suffrage. I dread such things ever coming into England. I see what has

occurred in other countries. I look at France and see the despotism of one man ; I look at America and see the despotism of a mob. But there is a middling way to obtain those things. England would be prouder, stronger, and safer, if a great portion of the mechanical class was admitted to the franchise. Now gentlemen, I have given my sentiments as far as I can on all the prominent topics of the day, and what is my own position ? I did not intrude myself upon you, for I had not sufficient confidence in my own abilities and fame to venture in a borough so well known and distinguished as Liskeard. You invited me to come among you, and I came. You returned me as an independent member to Parliament unpledged. I have violated no pledge, and I am here to abide by your judgment. I am proud to represent you as long as you are willing I should represent you on the principles which I have endeavoured to enunciate ; but should there be any disappointment on your part at my not having come up to what you expected, I am content, as I have before said, to abide by your verdict and retire to that private life of which I do not need the means of enjoying. Gentlemen, I should not fulfil my duty if I did not say I am here to invite any questions from any part of the room—from electors or non-electors, or from the fair sex I see in the gallery.

Come one, come all, this rock shall fly
From this firm base as soon as I.

Such were some of the confessions of faith made by Bernal Osborne to his constituents. The eloquence, the boldness, and the independence he displayed in telling home-truths concerning his own party were characteristic and won him a temporary triumph at Liskeard. He had made as it were an armistice. But the conference in Cornwall no more settled the quarrel between him and his party than did the famous Conference at London settle the quarrel between Denmark and Germany. How the war broke out afresh and how it ended will be seen hereafter.

CHAPTER XXI.

1865. CORRESPONDENCE.—RESIGNATION OF
SEAT AT LISKEARD.

IN the early part of 1865 Osborne was at Newtown Anner suffering from a most painful attack of sciatica, and unable to attend to his Parliamentary duties. His correspondence during this interval contains some interesting letters. Mr. Lowe writes to him in March :—

Many thanks for your kind offer about a horse. The season has been so bad that I have preferred walking to riding, and my old mare has had such an entire rest that the learned tell me she will be able to scramble through the season. I have done what little I can, *haud passibus æquis*, to enliven in your absence the gentle dulness of Westminster, which 'ever loves a joke,' but in your absence does not often get one. Here is one of mine, *faute de mieux*. Maguire¹ asks what is the difference between the cultivator of India and of Ireland? I say the first is a ryot and the second a rioter—positive and comparative. . . . Everybody wants to know what you do about a seat. You don't mention your health, so I suppose it is better than I was led to suppose. There is to be a row about Canada.

It is evident from this that Liskeard had soon recovered the effects of the October oration, and had again thrown out signals of disapproval.

Again we find Mr. Kinglake in correspondence

¹ M.P. for Cork city.

with Osborne. Replying to a note from the historian he writes :—

Newtown Anner, Clonmel : March 11, 1865.

MY DEAR KINGLAKE,—Your note has fixed my attention on Lord Palmerston's reply to Mr. White, intimating that Government will not repeal 'the Aberdeen Act.' There is a notice still standing in my name for its repeal. Whether it would be wise under existing circumstances to bring it on is a consideration for after Easter, then we shall know more about the Portuguese intervention : Parliament, 'pleased to the last,' seems to 'crop its flowery head,' and take no thought of its dissolution. Surely a Palmerstonian dynasty cannot hold on after the scattering of this Parliament? Of course my anti-Palmerstonian politics will not further my popularity at Liskeard. It is on the cards that I may be driven away there ; but as yet I have formed no plan in any other place. When do you anticipate the general election will come off? and what are the calculations as to its results in England. In this country no Palmerstonian need apply. I observe 'that distinguished officer who has served his country for sixty years' has again complimented every one ; but on the whole St. Stephen's appears to be more dull than the other places of amusement.

Ever truly yours,
R. OSBORNE.

By return of post came the following reply :—

House of Commons : March 13, 1865.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—There is a vulgar popularity attaching to Palmerston's measures against slavery, and for that reason I think that a motion to repeal the Aberdeen Act would come better after than before a general election.

Now that an election approaches, there is, I think, a strong sense of humiliation in the Liberal party founded upon the way in which the Government acceded to office, and the subsequent evasion of Reform engagements, but no one seems to know what to do nor even what to wish for.

The present impression is that the dissolution will be in July, but this might be prevented by the duration of the

private business, and I think that Palmerston's instinct would incline him to take advantage of any fair pretext for postponing the dissolution of a Parliament which he has found so complaisant.

It will be a great delight to me to see you once more.

Always truly yours,

A. W. KINGLAKE.

At the end of March Mr. Kinglake, in a letter to Mrs. Osborne, evidently replying to some query about Lord Palmerston, writes from the House of Commons :—

House of Commons : March 29, 1865.

MY DEAR MRS. OSBORNE,—I never heard of the 'old sinner,' as I am accustomed to call him, having got knocked down.

Whatever has happened to him, the old boy is really as vigorous as ever, apparently, in mind. Last year, I used to fancy that I saw the effect of age upon his mind, but now, strange to say, I fail to perceive this.

It is quite true that Lady Waldegrave at one of her parties was in pain with sciatica, and that she went to bed before her rooms were cleared of visitors, but there was not any violent attack of pain such as to create a scene.

I am concerned to hear of Osborne's having been so great a sufferer. When I heard from him a week or two ago, he did not convey this to me. I hope and trust he is now getting right, and that after Easter we shall have him here and once more hear the cheering sound of his voice.

Remember me to him most kindly as well as to the young ladies, and

Believe me, my dear Mrs. Osborne,

Most truly yours,

A. W. KINGLAKE.

The young ladies mentioned by Mr. Kinglake were Bernal Osborne's two daughters, the only children of his marriage with Mrs. Osborne. Both were subse-

quently married ; the eldest to Mr. Blake, R.M., now Governor of the Bahamas ; the younger to the present Duke of St. Albans.

Again Mr. Kinglake writes to his friend, deploring Osborne's absence.

12 St. James's Place : April 7, 1865.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—I cannot let this half of the Session come to an end without saying once more how painfully one misses you. I hope and trust that the spring, which really seems coming at last, will restore you and bring you back to us at the end of this month.

The anxious subject for this year is the way in which Government is dealing with the contingency of an invasion of Canada by the power of the United States.

Delegates from Canada are on their way with instructions to press the Imperial Government for guarantees of loans and so forth—in other words, to get money. I daresay you read Lowe's two clever speeches on the subject. They suggest matters for very anxious consideration, but they were founded too much on the pure reasoning process to be perfectly applicable to so great an imperial question as the defence or abandonment of a part of the Queen's dominions. The matter was revived last night, and Elcho is going to put to the Government a very awkward question this evening. I think this subject is one which will interest you deeply when you are well enough to come back to us.

Pray thank Mrs. Osborne for her last kind letter to me with my kindest regards to her and to the young ladies.

I remain, my dear Osborne, most truly yours,

A. W. KINGLAKE.

Newtown Anner, Clonmel : April 10, 1865.

MY DEAR KINGLAKE,—The question of Canadian Fortifications has not escaped my attention. I so far coincide with you that, in voting the first instalment of 50,000*l.* on account of defences, the majority were under the impression that a complete understanding had been arrived at with the Canadian Government as to the amount each country was to pay

towards the works : it now seems no arrangement has been come to, and, no doubt, we shall be expected to pay the entire sum by loan or otherwise. The end of it will be Canada, like Denmark, will be 'left alone.' The question of how far Canada is defensible is purely a military consideration. So far as I can gather from military authorities it would only be inviting defeat to attempt a prolonged defence in that country against America ; our better plan would be to lend Canada a million or so, and let her set up for herself. I am sure this would be cheaper and wiser for England in the long run.

Very truly yours,

R. OSBORNE.

After Easter, Osborne returned to town with his family, having taken, as usual, a house for the season.

In reply, apparently, to some inquiry, he received about this time a letter from Charles Dickens, on the subject of popular amusements.

17 Somers Place, Hyde Park, W. : Saturday, May 20, 1865.

DEAR BERNAL OSBORNE,—My name is not set to the petition in favour of Locke's Bill, because I never petition if I can possibly help it.

On principle I am for free trade in popular amusements, and in practice I believe that the conversion of Music Halls into Theatres would do a great deal of good. It would take the theatrical 'trade' out of a few hands, and give increased employment and gain to a great number of struggling people, and would bring, into a wholesome competition with ill-conducted theatres that have gradually brought themselves down, some enterprising men with capital at their disposal, and a good knowledge of the public. The sure consequence of a great success of a theatrical kind on the part of one of these would be the want of more room in front for the accommodation of the audience ; and the sure tendency of that would be the removal of the tables on which the eatables and drinkables are set, and the substitution of more seats. Why the eating and drinking, however, should be supposed to be so objectionable I cannot imagine. In these places at

present there is the most rigid enforcement of order without any distinction of class. I am always looking about and I have never seen drunkenness in a music hall.

* * * * *

The managers don't want to be stirred up in their activity and stirred down in their prices, and that is the whole secret of their opposition. Moreover, they have been complaining as against the music halls for a long time, that they, the managers, can't get singing chambermaids and the like, because the music halls take them away—that is to say, give them better pay, and more durable engagements. I know of many such small people who are supporting relations and friends out of number by being respectably engaged and respectably paid at music halls.

The Britannia, at Hoxton, is an immense theatre, beautifully constructed, having immense audiences all through the year, the great body composed of the very commonest people. I have seen the gradual transformation of that place from a 'saloon' to a fine theatre. That the character of the entertainments has risen as the transformation has progressed, I know beyond all doubt.

Believe me, faithfully yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

In the House of Commons affairs were dull and uninteresting, and the member for Liskeard does not seem to have found much food for criticism. The Parliament indeed was dying a natural death, and men were thinking and preparing for the future assembly rather than troubling themselves much about the last moments of the present. As we have seen, Osborne was not particularly sanguine about his chances of re-election at Liskeard, but up to June he had not received any definite expression of disapprobation.

He was not prepared for the manner in which it first reached him. One day he read in the morning papers that Sir Arthur Buller had been selected by the Liskeard constituency as their next candidate.

Only three weeks lay between this announcement and the expiration of Parliament. Osborne at once seized the opportunity of striking a double-edged blow in return for this political affront, and resigned his seat. His farewell address to the Liskeard electors was characteristic of the man, and formed a nine-days' wonder in Parliamentary circles.¹ By Osborne's

¹ TO THE ELECTORS OF LISKEARD.

GENTLEMEN,—Acting under the advice and with the concurrence of the leading Whigs and Liberals in your borough, I lately issued an address intimating my intention of asking a renewal of your support at the ensuing General Election. Until within the last few days I was led to suppose that my Parliamentary conduct had been in accordance with your sentiments, and my own declarations when honoured by your selection in August 1859. I was then invited to come forward by two conflicting sections of the party, who had agreed, as it now appears, only to postpone their differences for that special occasion. You returned me to Parliament as an independent supporter of Liberal principles ; not as the blind follower of a particular Minister. I have acted on that understanding. Without being a 'thick and thin' adherent of the Government, my humble aid has always been given to the enactment of such Liberal measures as have emanated from the present Administration. Mr. Gladstone's financial projects and fiscal reforms have had my constant support. To the last I stood by the Ministerial scheme of Parliamentary Reform when deserted by its parents. But it is now objected to me that I have not proved sufficiently docile to the crack of the Treasury Whip, because in the course of last session it was my misfortune to differ from those in whose company I generally vote, on the subject of the Danish Duchies, and because I then ventured to impugn the policy of Lord Palmerston which, in my judgment, tended to embroil England in a costly and uncalled for war with the United Powers of Germany, and also abstained from joining in a vote of confidence in the author of this policy. Anticipating objections that might be made to my absence from the division, I called a public meeting of the constituency, and while explaining and defending my views, then and there offered to resign the representation should a majority so determine. A few worthy individuals, more intent on domestic than foreign relations, questioned the correctness of my opinions on the Permissive Bill, but the meeting unanimously passed a vote of thanks for my independent services in Parliament. It has now transpired at the eleventh hour that an influential section of the electors, acting in secret conclave, have resolved to withdraw their support on the ground that I am not so devoted a follower of Lord Palmerston as they could desire or would direct. In this dilemma, I am counselled by some of my late friends (in order to prevent a renewal of

sudden resignation the chosen candidate of Liskeard, Sir Arthur Buller, was obliged to vacate his own seat at Devonport. This of course might result in two election contests instead of one in that borough within three or four weeks, the general election being imminent, and accordingly the Liberal party were seriously put out by Osborne's action.

The press hailed the incident as an excellent theme for party writing. The *Times* gravely condemned the recalcitrant free-lance for the step he had taken. The *Globe* declared his action was 'after all but a sixpenny piece of chivalry.' The *Morning Herald* thought he would have done better to have kept his seat till the dissolution, 'but there can be no doubt that he was badly treated by his party. He has been faithful to the professions of the party whilst they have broken their pledges, and because he has reminded them of their promises they have endeavoured to ostracize him.' The *Standard* said: 'It is not given to all men, however versatile, to refrain from practical joking. Mr. Osborne's sudden retreat from Liskeard is a practical joke of the most biting nature.' The *Pall Mall Gazette*, then only some four months old, wrote an article upon Osborne which, in some respects, is a clever sketch of character.¹ The *Saturday Review*²

that schism, which I was originally called in to heal) to resign the seat. Accordingly, as it does not suit my ideas of a representative to be returned as a Treasury dependent or a provincial delegate, I have adopted their suggestion, and as I read to-day in the public prints for the first time, that you have been provided by the managers of your political concerns with a more congenial candidate, I lose no time in forthwith resigning the honour which was never sought by me, and have made application for the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds. I am, &c.,

June 14, 1865.

RALPH OSBORNE.

¹ *Pall Mall Gazette*, June 19, 1865. Appendix E.

² *Saturday Review*, June 24, 1865. Appendix E.

descanted with the greatest gusto upon 'Mr. Bernal Osborne and his Party' and the general usefulness of 'able independent members.' Comparing him with Mr. Horsman, Mr. Lowe, and Mr. Roebuck, it said :—

Mr. Bernal Osborne is scarcely a man of the calibre of any of these three, but still he has a power of piquant, occasionally even trenchant, criticism, which is uncommonly telling, and does good service. The House always listens to him, and everybody who ever reads debates at all takes care to read his speeches. Mr. Osborne is not remarkable for timidity or bashfulness, and the bold things which he does not restrain himself from saying are obviously more disagreeable to the Ministry, but more weighty with the public, than if they came from the opposite side of the House. The 'whips' may dislike men of this stamp, and political puritans may think a joke at the expense of two bodies of British electors frivolous or downright wicked. Although nobody can be violently enthusiastic on his behalf, still people who are neither whips nor puritans would be sorry to miss Mr. Osborne in the New Parliament. At all events it would be hard to keep him out simply because he has a trick of returning evil for evil.

Thus ended Osborne's connexion with Liskeard. He retired into the mystic political retreat, known as the stewardship of Hempholme Manor, and emerged at Newtown Anner once more as a private gentleman. Just before Christmas he wrote to Lady Dorothy Neville, one of his intimate friends, declaring he was in any thing but a merry mood, detesting as he did all anniversaries and Church feasts and fasts. 'It is grievous,' he says, 'to reside in a country where one has so few sympathies, and which is always on the eve of an outbreak. For the movement called "Fenian," which appears so ridiculous in England, is

a more serious matter here. The disaffection is so widespread one never feels secure for the future. Indeed, the gulf which separates rich and poor here is wider than in any other country. And each day adds to the mutual distrust. How much I should prefer a small cottage near Reigate to a mansion in this, you may imagine.'

Notwithstanding these lamentations Bernal Osborne, when in a brighter mood, enjoyed life in Ireland in spite of Fenianism and the 'state of the country.' He had many warm friends, and he visited them frequently. He had a couple of racehorses training at the Curragh, and his farm at Newtown Anner supplied his leisure with abundant food for non-political reflection. Then Newmarket was a most favourite resort, and during the autumn racing season he was a frequent visitor at Gunnersbury, Molecomb, Danebury, Mentmore, Bretby, Dangstein, and Drake-lowe. In fact, so welcome a guest was Bernal Osborne at English and Irish country houses that, were he so minded, he could have spent the greater part of the year in one long continued round of visits.

But to be out of Parliament was to lose the highest pleasure of life. Having once drunk deep of the political elixir no man is satisfied while he remains outside the magic circle of the House of Commons lobby. Osborne was no exception to the rule.

He had not to wait long, and perhaps the story of his next campaign is as curious as any to be found in the annals of Parliamentary elections.

CHAPTER XXII.

1866. CORRESPONDENCE.

FOR the first few months of 1866 Osborne was in Ireland. January saw him, together with Mrs. and Miss Osborne, guests of Lady Waldegrave, at the Chief-Secretary's Lodge. In March he attended the Grand Jury, at Waterford, for the Assizes. Punchestown races never failed to attract so keen a sportsman, and there he was thoroughly in his element. But while thus enjoying a brief exemption from active political life, Osborne took care to be well informed on public affairs. His correspondence just now is most interesting, as giving a glimpse behind the scenes of the political drama, and showing the views of the men who were engaged in the real bustle and strife of politics. Delane writes :—

February 1, 1866.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—It may seem very ungrateful that I should not have answered your last most interesting and assuring letter, but I have not only been inordinately busy, but anxious to send you something from here in addition to the ordinary forty-eight columns daily, which might be worth your reading. You ask about the prospects of the Government. They ought to be good, for, as you know, it contains a more than ordinary amount of ability ; but, even in the outspoken Cabinets of the last ten years I have never known such flagrant discontent and despair openly expressed.

Nobody in the whole Cabinet except Lord Russell and Gladstone have the least hope or desire of carrying a Reform

Bill. They say the subject was disinterred only to meet the personal exigencies of Lord John, and he may carry it if he can.

After putting it for the fourth time into the Queen's speech, he can't now resist bringing in a Bill, but nobody professes to believe he can carry one. If it is a single-barrelled one, the common-sense of the House and the country will reject it; if it includes disfranchisement, it will have equally little chance. And, if it did, by any species of luck, struggle through the Commons, it would reach the Lords so late and with so small a majority that they would refuse to pass it. What happens? A general break-up, or a reconstruction? I expect the ancient precedent of Jonah will be observed, and that John will be cast out.

Gladstone, however, has as yet done as ill in his new place as Palmerston did in 1855, or as Denison did when he first took the chair. He let himself in for a damaging defeat on Thursday, and was only saved by Sir George Grey from another. I don't see how it is to last.

In the meantime, the Tories admit that they are not ready, and so, though much against my ordinary opinions, I think there is a chance for a third party, which includes the unattached, such as Stanley, Lowe, Horsman, &c. Lowe has hitherto done exceedingly well this season, and has enormously improved his position. His spar with Bright on Wednesday, and with Mill last night, were much to his advantage.

Little as Lord John likes him, he might have had the India Office the other day, and might have the Home whenever Sir G. Grey retires.

But how do you like the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus*? I am just going to hear what can be said in defence of it; but, as at present informed, I am inclined to think it rather a hasty measure.

Ever yours,

W. T. DELANE.

To his friend Sir William Gregory, the member for Galway, Osborne writes of Lady Waldegrave:—

She has castled King Wodehouse, and moves the Queen of Dublin Society: can the machine as constructed go

on, even though driven by Gladstone? I shall be much obliged by your giving me the benefit of your notions on this subject, as I am now a retired country gentleman in search of a seat and a party. As for Ireland, what can be said for it? The southern portion is certainly entirely disaffected, i.e. all below the class termed gentry. It seems odd that our Whig rulers should be fiddling about Reform whilst Ireland is preparing for Revolution. Were I in Parliament at this juncture I would move for a Committee of the whole House to inquire into the state of the country. Perhaps you will take the hint. To obviate further illegibility,

I remain yours, very truly,

R. O.

One of the great questions of the day at this time was the cattle disease or rinderpest, which at one period seriously threatened the agricultural interests in England. Osborne had written to Mr. Lowe upon the subject, who says in his reply:—

34 Lowndes Square : February 21, 1866.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—There seems nothing in the way of remedy or prophylactic of any avail. The Government promise a Bill for Ireland which, if they apply to it the knowledge they have acquired in the last few days, ought to be a good measure.

All I can advise is, if the disease should appear among you, the best advice I can give you is, if it is among your own cattle, to kill without mercy all diseased beasts, and all beasts in contact with them, and if the cattle belong to a poor man to get a subscription among the gentry, buy up the stock and kill them. Destroy all litter and everything in contact with them, and disinfect the building thoroughly. Of course every Irish gentleman would expect to be fully indemnified by the Consolidated Fund, that is quite out of the question in the present state of feeling in Parliament. I am in favour of what has been done here, the County rate, or *cess* as you call it in Ireland, but that only for beasts compulsorily killed, not for all losses. The best disinfectants I

believe to be carbolic acid, and the vapour of sulphur. So much for Rinderpest.

The conduct of the Government has been scandalous. Parliament ought to have been called together to deal with both Rinderpest and Fenianism The Government is in a wretched plight. . . . Everybody seems to hate everybody, and all agree in hating John more than anybody else. . . . I don't think they have any chance of carrying that great benefit to the human race, a Reform Bill, unless you or some vigorous man will come to their aid. I am rather unhappy about the remodelling of the Queen's University. I think the Catholics have got up a sham grievance in order to get the 'alderman' in, and break up the safe—am I right?

Always very sincerely yours,

R. LOWE.

Upon this important point of Reform Mr. Kinglake kept Osborne fully informed, as his letters show :—

12 St. James's Place : March 6, 1866.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—Would to heaven that you were here, for though hitherto there has been nothing that would interest you, the House is getting into a state upon which your voice would act with so much effect. I do hope and trust you will soon be once more in your place.

As far as I can judge, there is a kind of abeyance of political struggle pending the uncertainty about the Government measure of Reform. It is to come off on Monday next, and the present impression seems to be that it is a small measure ; but the Government have been evidently changing their tactics from day to day, and I shall not feel certain of anything till on Monday next I hear Gladstone make his statement. You may possibly have seen Bright's newspaper, the *Morning Star*, suddenly took to charging Gladstone with the betrayal of Lord Russell. I imagine that this must have been founded upon complaints made by Lord Russell to Bright.

I propose to write to you again about Friday week, for by that time—as I shall see a large gathering of Liberal members on Thursday the 15th—I expect to be able to give you

some idea of the way in which the Liberal Party may seem inclined to deal with the new Reform Bill.

So far as I know, the only men acting together in a special way are Lowe, Elcho, and a few others all hostile to Reform.

Remember me most kindly to the ladies, and believe me, my dear Osborne, most truly yours,

A. W. KINGLAKE.

House of Commons : March 16, 1866.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—I promised that about this time I would write to you a second letter on the ‘situation.’

I yesterday saw together and with opportunity of discussing the question, a few men on our side the House -- there were ten of them—and only one, as I understood, was favourable to the Government Bill, though most of the rest thought they might have to vote for it, notwithstanding that they called it ‘paltry;’ and there was also an impression that the Bill might pass the second reading, but no one, as I gathered, imagined that it would ever become law. I have written all this about the Bill, because of course the fate of the Government must more or less be governed by the fate of the measure.

The ground for insisting that the question of the redistribution of seats should be dealt with at the same time as the franchise question is exceedingly strong, and I should imagine it probable that an amendment to that effect will be moved.

Would to heaven that you were amongst us, for the ‘situation’ is becoming one of great interest. Gladstone is to give an important answer on Monday to a question relating to the Reform Bill, and after that, I suppose, the measure will pass under the close review of the constituencies for the next three weeks or so, and that when we re-assemble the country may have declared itself in terms sufficiently clear to give something like guidance to the House of Commons.

My kindest regards to the ladies.

Always, my dear Osborne, most truly yours,

A. W. KINGLAKE.

12 St. James's Place : March 29, 1866.

MY DEAR OSBORNE,—The Government people give out that if they can see a prospect of a verdict in their favour from an appeal to the country, they will reply to any fatally adverse vote on the Reform by dissolving Parliament ; and although it be the Government people who say it, I am inclined to think the announcement may be true ; but it does not seem to me to amount to much ; for the present House of Commons has not at all committed itself against Reform, and I know of no reason as yet for inferring that the House is an inch behind the country, in this matter. In other words, I see no great likelihood of our coming to a vote against Reform which the country, when appealed to, could fairly be expected to reverse.

Upon the whole, therefore, I should decidedly say to you : ' Don't let slip any fair opportunity of coming in at one of the isolated elections on the mere speculation that there will be an early dissolution.'

I have not been seeing any of the industrious men who go over lists, and count names, but, unless Bright's violence should disgust people during the recess, the Government, I should imagine, will have a good majority, or at least a majority on the second reading ; for as soon as they resolved, which they did at the Cabinet on Friday last, to adopt the terms of my amendment, Lord Grosvenor's motion lost all its sting.

I can be supported of course by the enemies of Reform, and by the enemies of the Government, but that mass can hardly now draw any accession of strength from the blunder which the Government committed in attempting to put a year between their franchise Bill and their measure for re-distribution of seats.

If the Government carry the second reading, I think they will not *really* commit their existence to the success of the Bills in their ulterior stages, but will combine to make the House and the country partakers of their difficulty.

There will be a clear prospect in a week or so, for there is

a kind of understanding that during the Easter recess the pulse of the country is to be felt.

My kindest regards to the ladies.

Always, my dear Osborne, most truly yours,

A. W. KINGLAKE.

You of course keep your eye on the election petitions, with a view to a vacancy. I hear men say that the return for Nottingham cannot stand.

It will be seen from these letters how anxious Mr. Kinglake was to see Bernal Osborne back in the House of Commons. The historian of the invasion of the Crimea had a strong admiration of his friend's Parliamentary qualities, and a deliberate conviction of his great usefulness in public life. The advice given as to seeking a constituency speedily, and the hint about Nottingham, probably hastened Osborne's return to London. He arrived at his lodgings in Pall Mall on April 20, and a week later he was once more on the political platform, and this time at Nottingham.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NOTTINGHAM ELECTION, 1866.

THE Nottingham members, as we have seen from one of Mr. Kinglake's letters to Osborne, were generally thought likely to lose the seats which they had won at the general election. On April 20 the House was informed that the election committee had decided that Sir Robert Jukes Clifton, Bart., and Mr. Samuel Morley were not duly elected. It was found that bribery in the form of direct money payments extensively prevailed in Nottingham and much evidence was given as to the tumultuous gatherings and riotous character of the constituents. In fact the 'lambs' of Nottingham became well known at this time, and, taken altogether, probably there was not a borough in the kingdom at which so much rough work might be expected during a contested election.

Liberal politics in Nottingham had been for some years previous to 1866 in a state of confusion. The Liberal party was divided, and the opposing sections hated each other quite as cordially as they both hated the Conservatives. A local oligarchy, consisting chiefly of members of the Nottingham Corporation, who held private political meetings in room No. 30 of the Town Hall, had for many years wielded almost absolute sway over the borough. It had received a severe blow by the return of Sir Robert Clifton on his first election

in 1861, and the events which followed the unseating of the popular baronet and Mr. Morley on petition in 1866 were really the final efforts of the constituency to free itself from the dictation of a political clique.

The origin of Bernal Osborne's first introduction to the Nottingham electors was quaint and characteristic. The Independent Society in the city was the rival political association to 'No. 30,' as the corporation party was nick-named. One active member and founder of it, a plain practical man, carrying on a retail business in the town—Samuel Bunting by name—had been for some years reading Osborne's speeches in the newspapers and admiring the independence of his political principles. Nottingham was engaged in a struggle against the dictation of a few wirepullers. He recognised in Osborne a man who had been ousted from his seat in consequence of his own independent action. The Independent Society could not have a better man to fight its battles. So thought Samuel Bunting, and he confided his views to his friend, Dr. Unthank, another influential 'independent.'

The same idea seems to have occurred to Sir Robert Clifton about the same time. The report unseating him for Nottingham was presented to the House of Commons the very day Osborne arrived in London from Ireland, and on the following Wednesday Sir Robert Clifton telegraphed to the Independent Society requesting them to ask Bernal Osborne to stand for Nottingham. That very evening Mr. Bunting was sent up to London as a deputation to wait upon the very man whom he had in his own mind settled upon as the best possible candidate to fight his ancient enemy, 'No. 30.' He placed the situation at Nottingham before Osborne so clearly and with such evident

knowledge that the immediate result was that the late member for Liskeard consented to go down as soon as possible to Nottingham and see how matters stood before he committed himself to the contest. Bunting, however, had made up his own mind that there should be no drawing back. On his return the Independent Society took the matter up vigorously and made arrangements for a large meeting the next day, at which they requested Bernal Osborne, by telegraph, to attend. His telegraphic reply was in the affirmative, and thus the first step was taken in the matter.

The constituency had already been besieged with candidates. Mr. Serjeant Simon was earliest in the field, though Lord Amberley, eldest son of Earl Russell, was the first candidate, formally adopted by the Liberal Society, or 'Number 30.' Mr. Handel Cossham, a gentleman from Bristol, was in the first instance brought forward by the Nonconformist and temperance interest, and was subsequently adopted as the second Liberal candidate, when Bernal Osborne rejected the conditions of candidature submitted to him by the corporation party, by whom he had also been approached. There was also in the field Sir George Samuel Jenkinson, a Gloucestershire baronet, who represented the hopes of the Tory party in the borough.

Bernal Osborne, on April 27, started with a return ticket on his electioneering reconnoitre, little dreaming of the preparations that had been made for him. At Grantham a deputation, including Bunting, met and accompanied him to Nottingham, where an enthusiastic reception awaited his arrival. Within a mile of the station Osborne's quick ear caught strange sounds. 'What are those noises?' he asked of Bunting. 'Well,' said that astute political practitioner, 'we didn't like

to bring you into the town without a little notice, and so I got some foghorns blown along the line, just to tell them you were coming.'

When Nottingham was reached, it was evident the town was astir, to the visitor's great astonishment. A landau, drawn by four grey horses, and postilions, awaited the party. A young lady upon the platform presented him with a bouquet, and the Independent candidate was driven by a circuitous route through crowded streets, across the great market-place, to the Black Boy Hotel.

The crowd of people in the Market-place, a very large area of some seven acres, grew rapidly so dense that it was considered impracticable to carry out the original intention of speaking from the windows. Two waggons were accordingly placed nearly in the centre of the market-place, and once more, from an impromptu platform, Osborne delivered an address, which took his audience by storm, and there and then settled the question of his candidature.

Rain fell at intervals, and it was late before the meeting broke up. But notwithstanding these drawbacks, Osborne's speech was received with extraordinary enthusiasm. His voice rang out with full, rich distinctness, and was heard all over the great market-place. He dealt largely with the question of the Reform Bill, at that moment under discussion in the House of Commons, and his speech was in all respects an admirable statement of his political principles, flavoured, moreover, with broad illustrations and happy hits largely appreciated by his mixed audience. A witticism he made at the expense of one of the candidates is still repeated in Nottingham as an instance of his readiness :—

Gentlemen (he said, at the commencement of his speech), you will naturally ask what are my principles. In reply, I say my principles are truly speaking independent principles. I came here as the nominee of no party and of no man. I stand here equally free from territorial, pecuniary, or Governmental influences. Gentlemen, I have not even the satisfaction, like my respectable opponent (if I may call him so), Mr. Cossham, I have not the satisfaction of a 'Handel' to my name. And like the hon. and gifted serjeant, whose address I have seen in the *Times*, if I do not come before you as a 'Simple Simon,' I at least come before you as the real 'Simon Pure,' determined to stoop to no arts and no intimidation, nor anything that is illegal in any way, but canvassing for your suffrages on the broad principle of independence and freedom; to ask your votes, not as 'lambs' that are to be dressed with mint sauce, but as independent reasoning Englishmen.

The various hits in this passage told immensely, but none so much as the allusion to Mr. Handel Cossham. Osborne became at once the idol of the popular party, and before he left Nottingham the same evening for London, Mr. Bunting informed him that his success was already assured.

There only remained the question of expense, and Osborne's frank letter to the Independent Society is as good an illustration of his opinions upon election expenses as could be given.

April 30, 1866.

DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 28th inst., inclosing an estimate of what are considered the 'legitimate expenses' attendant on a contested election for Nottingham, and lose no time in apprising the Independent Society of my views, and the conditions on which I am willing to become a candidate, and go to the poll. Putting altogether aside the question of expenses, I should decline to open any public-houses, pay or appoint any agents, or make a personal canvass for votes. As regards what are termed 'the legitimate expenses,' the sum of 700*l.* detailed in your

letter appears under the circumstances in excess of the outlay which should be expended in legal conditions, without going into a minute criticism of the items for 'Printing' and 'Cabs.' I am not disposed to pay more than 400*l.* towards the expenses of a contest, which must be conducted, in the event of my becoming a candidate, on strict principles of purity. Further, to guard against any future misconception of my position, should I succeed in becoming the representative of your city, it must be understood that I do not feel myself called upon to contribute to local establishments or charities. Be so good as to lay these remarks before your society, and should they not meet their requirements, lose no time in selecting a better candidate.

I am, dear Sir, faithfully yours,

R. OSBORNE.

The Secretary, Independent Society, Nottingham.

In London Osborne's candidature was followed with a great deal of interest, and the press wrote in various strains upon the split in the Liberal camp. The *Owl* in the following lines made a very good forecast of the result :—

NOTTINGHAM.

Clifton's Baronet now may rove
In the precincts poetic of Clifton Grove ;
Paget, in weary mood, may go
Up and down beneath Long Row ;
Morley may talk in a dignified way
When the Nonconformists meet in May ;
Quiet tasks are the Fates allotting 'em,
While Bernal Osborne sits for Nottingham.

Simple Simon, Serjeant sage,
Home will go in a towering rage ;
Amberley something fresh will plan—
'The child's the father of the man ;'
Smith, that excellent Tory banker,
Vainly to head the poll will hanker.
Though hopes of triumph are besotting 'em,
Osborne will win the day at Nottingham.

Snuff out Bristol's farthing candle,
 Cossham, whose name has a musical handle ;
 Who such a fellow to Nottingham sent ?
 What can teetotallers want by Trent ?
 But as quick wit shows where wisdom lies,
 And in truth's high track the gay jest flies,
 When to the five their place allotting 'em,
 Let Osborne head the poll at Nottingham.¹

In another issue we find the general wish for Osborne's return to public life expressed in a poetical *mandamus* from the *Owl* :—

Borough for boxers and cricketers famous,
 Hearken ! we issue our mighty *mandamus*,
 Bristol's teetotaller—man without scandal,
 Who to his name has a musical handle—
 Amberley, youngster of easy vivacity,
 Second alone to papa in audacity ;
 Smith, Tory banker, as wealthy as Timon
 Of Athens, or legal and eloquent Simon ;
 Choose which you please ; but to earn our eternal
 Thanks as his colleague choose laughter-loving Bernal :
 Ever, when bores and philosopher pester,
 Parliament mourns for the loss of her jester.

When Osborne returned a few days afterwards to Nottingham, determined, as he said, ' to peel and throw my hat into the ring,' he had already secured the personal co-operation of Sir Robert Clifton. This meant a great deal. Sir Robert was the head of a Nottingham family whose ancestors had come over with William the Conqueror, and whose representatives had for many generations been noted for their remarkable performances by flood and field.

Old Sir Jukes had been well known as an eccentric character, fond of country life, racing, and field sports. In these also his son excelled. Sir Robert had ridden at the Nottingham races in 1845 in company with his

¹ *Owl*, May 2, 1866.

brother-in-law, Sir H. H. Bruce, and Sir William Don, and at the time we speak of had further endeared himself to the population of Nottingham by his sporting proclivities and by his cordial manner and bearing. Moreover, the recollection of the baronet's recent electoral contests were still fresh in everyone's mind. In 1861 he had come forward in a characteristic slap-dash manner, without the slightest previous intimation, and had carried all before him by a *coup de main*, which was absolutely irresistible. The corporation party were defeated, and Sir Robert was quite the hero of the people. 'Bobby Clifton,' as he was called by every man, woman, and child in Nottingham, was, by his peculiar individuality, a great personal and political power, and when he appeared on the platform to support Osborne, the welcome the Independent candidate received was redoubled.

The issues were now closely knit. The Liberal Society had finally adopted Lord Amberley and Mr. Cossham as their candidates, notwithstanding that Mr. Samuel Morley had written a letter approving of Osborne's candidature. Bernal Osborne stood on his own merits, Mr. Serjeant Simon had retired, and Sir George Jenkinson held on in the hopes of coming in between the opposing Liberals. A fifth candidate appeared at the last moment, a Mr. D. Faulkner, who was looked upon throughout the contest as a sort of political mountebank. He polled three votes, 'a respectable trinity of votes,' as Osborne called them, and was a source of infinite fun to the mob in the market-place throughout the contest.¹

¹ As an instance, the following account is taken from a Nottingham paper of his interview with the Licensed Victuallers' Association :—' Mr. Faulkner, after entering the room, was introduced by the chairman. He commenced by reading his address, and then went on to say that he owed his success in life to reading when a boy a little book presented to

As the canvassing proceeded, it was soon evident that Osborne was the favourite candidate. The women of Nottingham—and then, as now, the female element preponderated in the population—were especially anxious for his return, attending his meetings in large numbers and loudly applauding him during his numerous speeches. As the nomination day approached, the rival Liberal factions grew more and more bitter. Osborne directed all his attacks against Cossham, and from the commencement of the battle was in hopes of seeing Lord Amberley returned with him. He did not, however, scruple to declare his own feelings as to the unfortunate coalition between Earl Russell's son and the West of England adventurer, and it was probably owing to his description of the ill-assorted political couple that he received a letter of remonstrance from Lord Russell.¹ A vast number of political

him by a minister of the Gospel in Nottingham, which related an anecdote of the energy of Sir Fowell Buxton. After dilating on the importance of energy, he remarked that he was well known to 20,000 people in London. He regarded the principle of Maine law as injurious, his own opinion being that no class of men had so strong a desire that men should not make beasts of themselves as licensed victuallers. He quoted the saying of Mr. J. Mackie, of Manchester, that it was against the interests of the licensed victuallers to have men dead drunk. He paid a compliment to Mr. Grant, the conductor of the *Morning Advertiser*, and said his position proved that a man might be a licensed victualler and a respectable man at the same time. After explaining that he considered himself a working man, he said if returned he should do all in his power on every question upon which he was requested to act. He should now ask them to put any questions to him if they thought proper. A member: "I wish to ask you one question, Sir?" Mr. Faulkner: "Yes; what is it?" A member: "What will you take?" Mr. Faulkner said he would take whatever they chose to order, and ultimately a glass of brandy was brought him.'

Pembroke Lodge, Richmond Park, S.W.: May 6, 1866.

¹ DEAR BERNAL OSBORNE,—I am very sorry you are acting in a way to injure Amberley's prospects at Nottingham.

You must be aware that when he was invited to stand he could only

squibs¹ were put forth, and speeches were delivered incessantly in every quarter of the city by each candidate until at last the nomination day arrived.

accept or refuse for himself, and could not dictate to the electors the choice of the second Liberal candidate.

Yet you attack him on this ground, and I am sorry to hear you are doing him much harm.

This to a very young man is hardly fair.

I remain yours truly,
RUSSELL.

Saturday: May 11, 1866.

DEAR LORD RUSSELL,—I have abstained from replying to your note of the 6th inst., until able to congratulate you on Lord Amberley's return for Nottingham, although it is a matter of regret that the force of circumstances obliged him to enter into a coalition against me with a gentleman of extreme political opinions, who accused me of coming forward with the assistance, pecuniary and political, of the Carlton Club. Allow me to assure you, that, so far from acting in an unfriendly manner towards your son, the course which I adopted from respect to yourself materially conduced to his ultimate success. I am, dear Lord Russell,

Faithfully yours,
RALPH OSBORNE.

¹ Perhaps the best squib was the following one in racing jargon :—

1. NAMBY PAMBERLEY by PRIME MINISTER out of SHIFTY.—A well-bred pony, but his antecedents show him to take after his dam. He ran for the Leeds Stakes last year, but bolted out of the course at the start, though ridden by that careful jockey Baines, and with only six pounds on him. He cannot be trusted.

2. TEATOTALLER, (h. b.) by SPOUT out of PUMP.—A very rough-trained old horse and inclined to roar. This animal is not in his proper company, Namby, who has led him in his gallops, and he will never be able to run the course. Both these horses are in the hands of a large party, said to be thirty in number, not at all united and too well known to be trusted.

3. The KICKER by FREE LANCE out of SPITE.—This old horse has always run well, but is known to be dangerous with his mouth when unmuzzled, as well as with his heels, by which he keeps all others at a distance. He has been out of training lately, but is doing good work and is sure to run well and get a place.

4. The BARONET, by PROGRESS out of SAFETY.—This horse ran a very game race last year for a county stake, though terribly over-weighted in that race. He is in the hands of a very honest and really liberal party, and is booked as a certain winner.

5. SIMON PURE, by BARRISTER out of CIRCUIT. This horse belongs

Hustings were as usual erected in front of the Exchange, and the proceedings commenced amid all the din of an electoral battle under the old system. Every point that could be made against each candidate was illustrated, and the 'lambs' of Nottingham were in great force, though, unlike the former election, by no means riotous. Indeed, so well conducted were the mob that Lady Amberley, Lady Clifton, and Lady Jenkinson, accompanied by a bevy of ladies, appeared at an early stage upon the platform and received tremendous ovations. The scene was remarkable, and furnishes a reminiscence which Nottingham men still cherish. The market-place, the largest in England, was densely packed by an overwhelming multitude. Every window was crammed. Women waved handkerchiefs. The whole city was out of doors, and the air was rent with the good-humoured vociferations of thousands of voices. Women were largely represented in the crowd, and the old ballad—

If she take a glass often,
There's nothing can soften

The heart of a woman like Nottingham ale,

may or may not have been largely honoured in the observance on this auspicious occasion. At all events Osborne had no more enthusiastic supporters on the nomination day than 'the ladies' of Nottingham, from all classes and conditions of the people.

Lord Amberley and Mr. Handel Cossham were first proposed. Then Mr. Faulkner convulsed the groundlings by taking off his coat, putting up his eye to a clever party, and is not to be despised. (This horse we hear is since scratched.)

6. PREMIUM, by ASSURANCE out of NOTHING.—This horse has never run in public, but he will start and run his best, with an eye to the future.

glass, and, after some further antics, finally addressing the people in the most nonsensical terms.

Bernal Osborne came next and was received with extraordinary outbursts of cheering. For some time it was impossible for him to gain a hearing, but at last silence was procured and his voice was heard in every corner of the market-place. It is impossible to reproduce the effect of any platform speech where the magnetism of numbers acts and reacts on the speaker and his audience. Suffice it to say that Osborne, as on many a former occasion, carried the people with him and made the assurance of his election doubly sure by the manner and the matter of his remarks. There was one point on which throughout this election Osborne was particularly strong, viz., the absolute necessity of maintaining the purity of the election. Indeed, the way in which his own part of it was conducted is an admirable illustration of what could be done even in the days before the ballot. There were no solicitors engaged, no electoral agents employed, no paid canvassers at seven and sixpence a day, and no 'lambs' penned up in the pleasant folds of public-houses at the candidate's expense. He won the election by the self-sacrifice of his supporters, who fought the battle on principle, and appealed to the independent judgment of the constituents.

The following day was, if anything, a more remarkable scene than the nomination. Nottingham was in a ferment of excitement, and all sorts of rumours were afloat as to the balance of votes. In the early part of the day the Liberal coalition was in front and Lord Amberley headed the poll, Osborne and Cossham being about equal. At dinner-time, however, the tables were turned. The working-men

came out of the factories to support the Independent candidate, and Osborne's numbers rapidly increased. The contest grew more and more exciting as the day wore on. At four o'clock it was estimated that the market-place held thirty thousand people. At about five o'clock Sir Robert Clifton's carriage drove into the centre of the square, and from it, amidst tremendous cheering and waving of handkerchiefs, Osborne, still in ignorance of the result, addressed the crowd. He had been speaking for some minutes when a card was handed up to him. He glanced at it and then continued, in a stentorian voice: 'I can now give you what should more properly come from the Sheriff; but the following figures have been put into my hand, which show that I, the humble representative of the humble classes, am at the top of the poll.' A perfect whirlwind of applause swept over the market-place at this announcement, a forest of clapping hands flashed into sight, hats were thrown up and handkerchiefs waved. After some more congratulations and returning of thanks the carriage was drawn with great difficulty through the crowd to the Lion Hotel, the Independent candidate's headquarters.

Here Osborne performed a very characteristic act. In the midst of his triumph he did not for one moment forget his friend Bunting. In front of the hotel he stood up on the carriage and called for silence. 'There is a man,' he said, 'in that balcony,' pointing up at the Lion Hotel, 'but for whom I should never have come to Nottingham, I mean Sam Bunting. Give him three cheers, for a better fellow never lived.' On a subsequent occasion, at a banquet given a few weeks later to celebrate his return, Osborne paid a generous tribute to Bunting:—

There is another person (he said) here present to whom I wish to return thanks, and I shall draw a simile from something I read in the papers this morning as I came down here. A great review took place at Colchester of the 11th Hussars. There was a fine display of plate, the Prince of Wales attended, speeches were made, and there was a most magnificent demonstration ; but there was one emblem which struck everybody as being of more interest than the silver bowls, the fine chased goblets, and other costly articles. It was a small brass bugle which sounded the charge of the regiment at Balaklava, and baptised them in glory. I have a small brass bugle in my eye in this room, the man who sounded the charge of battle in Nottingham and brought me down to fight. I should be unworthy, amid all the aristocracy and the great respectability around me, if I did not mention the name of that bugle and return him my humble thanks. Need I mention the name, of Mr. Bunting? Although Sir Robert Clifton led the regiment into action, Mr. Bunting was my first bugler ; therefore I take this first opportunity of thanking him, and whether or not I sit for Nottingham, I feel that in him I have found a friend.

Nothing could better illustrate one fine trait in the many-sided character of Bernal Osborne than these public and spontaneous expressions of gratitude to a man so immeasurably below him in the social scale as Bunting. But he admired and appreciated sterling merit wherever he found it, and never forgot a kind deed or personal trouble taken upon his account. So ended the election. The poll, when officially declared, stood as follows :—

Ralph Osborne . . .	2,518
Lord Amberley . . .	2,494
Sir G. S. Jenkinson, Bart.	2,411
Mr. H. Cossham . . .	2,307
Mr. Faulkner . . .	3

Each of the five candidates made their final ad-

dresses to the electors from the hustings, and Bernal Osborne returned to London senior member for Nottingham.

Osborne had now fought six contested elections, viz., Wycombe, Middlesex twice, Dover twice, and Nottingham, all of which he had fought on Independent principles. He had retired from Liskeard because he had refused to be the mere delegate of his constituency. At a public banquet given to celebrate his return for Nottingham, at which Mrs. Osborne was present, he took care to make his political relation to his constituency quite clear. 'I do not intend,' he said, 'to be the slave of any party or any man, but I intend to have an opinion of my own; and so long as I sit for Nottingham I mean to have that opinion. I do not hide it in a hole and corner, but speak it boldly.'¹ Before very long he was forced to fight for these principles, and realise once more how difficult it is to retain the favour of the enfranchised masses. His speeches on the platform had attracted a good deal of attention in London both in the press and in political life,² and his return to the House of Commons was matter of universal congratulation in Pall Mall and at St. Stephen's.

¹ *Nottingham Journal*, June 7, 1866. Appendix F.

² *Pall Mall Gazette*, May 18, 1866. See Appendix F.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SECOND NOTTINGHAM ELECTION.

OSBORNE came back to the House just as the country was watching with intense interest the fate of Mr. Gladstone's Reform Bill. It was rejected on Lord Dunkellin's amendment. The cave of Adullam completed its triumph, and Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone resigned office. The Queen's Government was carried on by Lord Derby, who, with Mr. Disraeli, formed a Ministry, destined to have a short but eventful history. During the close of the session the cry of Reform was re-echoed through and through the country, and the Hyde Park riot finally made it quite clear that some measure of Reform must soon be carried. Osborne was not silent during this short period. He spoke on various topics—breech-loading guns, fortification expenses, and on the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland, which he denounced as 'the old millhorse round of coercion.'

During the autumn he was moving about visiting his numerous friends in England and Ireland.

Early in 1867 he went to Nottingham to address a public meeting, and it was then the first symptoms of insecurity disclosed themselves. At the recent election the Conservatives had undoubtedly given him a certain amount of support, owing largely to his own personal merits and recommendations, and especially to his

plucky fight against great odds. Now all was changed. The Tory party hoped to win both seats, and Osborne was to be left to the tender mercies of 'No. 30.'

An enormous assembly filled the Exchange Hall in which Osborne was to speak, but there were signs of a 'row' at an early stage of the meeting. In order to secure seats near the platform for ladies and a certain number of supporters some admission tickets had been printed. In other respects the meeting was open and the numbers present were enormous. When the doors were opened, however, some 400 'lambs,' who had been provided with forged tickets, rushed up and stormed the reserved part of the hall. There was at once a terrible uproar, and it was quite evident that there was going to be a lively evening. After a prolonged squabble as to who should be chairman, and a general invasion of the platform by all comers, Osborne managed to get upon a table, and from thence he calmly surveyed the seething mob below. There was an outburst of cheering at his appearance, and if it had not been for organized interruption all would have gone well. But most of his time was taken up in answering his interrupters and chaffing those who were most conspicuous in the tumult. 'I'll make you, sir,' he said, addressing one in particular, 'a present of a razor if you will only shave that black beard and hold your tongue.' Now and then there was a lull. Then again the most horrible confusion reigned for five minutes, and Samuel Bunting in despair would come forward and entreat the people to give a man fair play. The appeal might be effectual perhaps for a minute and Osborne would begin: 'Local feeling may run somewhat strongly in this town, but I know nothing of your differences. I ask your votes as a public man seeking a public trust.'

over and over again long after Osborne finally left the scene of his Parliamentary labours.

Such then was the position of affairs when the prorogation of Parliament took place on the last day of July, and Osborne had to turn his thoughts to yet another contested election. He had no sooner returned with his wife and daughters to Ireland than he was taken suddenly and dangerously ill with gout, and was for some weeks entirely unable to concern himself with the details of an electoral campaign. Meanwhile the Nottingham Liberal Registration Association were hard at work, and candidates were issuing addresses. Two Liberals had already commenced a canvass early in September, and inasmuch as the general election was not to take place until the middle of November, Nottingham was plunged for three months into the acrimonious struggle of an electoral contest. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that local feeling ran high, and newspaper writers waxed warm. The amount of correspondence which appeared every morning on the rival merits of this and that person, or this and that party, was extraordinary. All the local poets seemed to have been ardent supporters of Bernal Osborne, and numerous ballads appeared supporting his candidature.¹ On the other hand, he was bitterly

¹ *THE OLD DOGS KICKS.*

(Vide Mr. Osborne's speech at the 'Spread Eagle'.)

'There's a kick in the old dog yet,'
Though slander its utmost has done,
Though enemies murmur and fret
The old dog will show them some fun.

He has kicked at the tax against bread
(To cause a cheap loaf to be had),
Though Melbourne most rashly had said
That those who denounced it were mad.

attacked by anonymous prose writers, and so the war of words was unsparingly carried on, until at last Osborne himself appeared upon the scene.

When he arrived in Nottingham in the second week of October he was weak after his illness, and almost unfit for the trying work before him. But he went into it with characteristic pluck. Two other Liberal candidates were in the field, Mr. Charles Seely, junior, son of the member for Lincoln, and a large employer of labour in the neighbourhood, and the Reverend Peter Clayden, a Nonconformist clergyman from London, who posed as the working man's

He has kicked with the heel of Reform,
When the great ones declared it no go,
And bravely has weather'd the storm
With the gallant old veteran 'Joe.'

He has kicked at the duty on tea,
And the working man's wife may well say :
'It is partly through Osborne, you see,
I've a cup of good Hyson to-day.'

He has kicked at the tax upon knowledge,
That the working man wiser may be,
And voted to open the college
To horrid Dissenters like me.

He has kicked at the cruel who would
The back of the brave soldier flay,
And striven as hard as he could
To kick the wild 'cat' far away.

He has kicked hard at every abuse,
Nor paused till he got to the goal,
So, electors, you have no excuse
If he's not at the head of the poll.

Independent electors, remember,
Hard work must your victory get,
And you'll find in the month of November
There's a kick in the old dog yet.

Hyson Green, October 28, 1868.

WALTER SMITH.

candidate. The Liberal Registration Association had put three questions to the late member for Nottingham, (1) whether he would abide by the decision of the Liberal party 'fairly and unequivocally expressed' as to his candidature; (2) whether, if chosen, he would cordially co-operate with the colleague who might be selected for him; and (3) whether he would pay a moiety of the legitimate expenses incurred in the election. Both the other Liberal candidates had agreed to these terms. Osborne refused. At a great public meeting on his arrival he gave his reasons.

I object (he said), as a member for this town, and as a Liberal member of twenty years' standing, I object to being put on the same footing as the two untried candidates. I do not object to being opposed, but I object to compromising the freedom of the constituency at large, and to confiding the choice to a small section, comparatively speaking. The proper place for a candidate to test the choice of his constituency is at the poll. If you think that I have falsified my pledges, or broken my promises, dismiss me at the poll. But I won't go to the ballot. I will tell you, however, what I will do. I will refer the whole matter. I will choose one man, John Bright, and they shall choose the other. If they say I ought to go away, then I will go. But this I never will do: I will never yield the proud position I have won to the domination of a small circle or the dictation of a small minority.

Then came the arbitration controversy, which lasted for weeks, and various leading politicians were invited to decide the knotty question, but no one cared to interpose in this political lovers' quarrel. The London press commented upon the situation, and Osborne's position was one of the political topics of the day. The *Times* wrote a leader pointing out the valuable services of the member for Nottingham, and the groundless jealousy which had prompted the calumnies

forged and uttered against him. But it was useless to prove that Osborne had never entered the 'cave of Adullam,' one of the accusations against him, and to reiterate his life-long fidelity to Liberal principles. Local bitterness, like a fever, ran its course, and when the dissolution was announced on November 11 there was no doubt as to the position of affairs. The Liberal Registration Association had selected Messrs. Seely and Clayden, and Osborne was left to fight out his own battle.

At the eleventh hour the situation was completely changed by the appearance of two more candidates—Sir Robert Clifton and Colonel Wright, of Stapleford Hall, Nottingham. The popular baronet stood upon his personal, rather than upon his political character. Colonel Wright represented the Conservatives, and, as it turned out, shared with Sir Robert the support of the Cliftonite party, which had on the last occasion proved so serviceable to Osborne.

For some days before the nomination, even Osborne's staunch supporter, Sam Bunting, was somewhat cast down. The incessant storm of printed calumny and libellous cartoons had done its work, and though personally as popular amongst the Nottingham masses as ever, the chances of a second victory for Osborne seemed to be gradually fading away. The same curious fate seemed to pursue him as at Dover. There, in 1859, when Reform, the subject he had always championed, was the burning question, he was defeated. Now, when the disestablishment of the Irish Church was imminent, he was again to be ousted from the national representation.

Upon the day of the poll, Osborne recognised that his return was impossible. The Conservatives had

played the waiting game with skill and judgment, and the coalition of Sir Robert Clifton and Colonel Wright had practically made the success of the divided Liberal party impossible. The official declaration of the poll was as follows :—

Sir Robert Juckes Clifton	.	.	5,285
Charles Ichabod Wright	.	.	4,591
Charles Seely, junior	.	.	4,004
Peter William Clayden	.	.	2,706
Ralph Bernal Osborne.	.	.	2,031

But if Osborne was left at the bottom of the poll, he was still *facile princeps* in the speeches¹ which concluded

¹ From the *Nottingham Daily Guardian*, November 19, 1868:—"He said: Mr. Sheriff, friends, and if I have any, foes, I address myself to both—you have heard from your senior member that he is stumped up. Think of *my* condition. You, as cricketers, will understand it when I tell you I am stumped out—stumped out without leaving my ground. Still the bails are off, like the wheel of that cart, and I have nothing to do but to retire into the bosom of my family. Well, gentlemen, whatever we do, let us conclude this contest in the manner in which we began it—in peace, goodwill, and friendliness. Matters are somewhat reversed from what they were last Monday, when I was in the first position. But I am accustomed to that; we have all read that the "last shall be first, and the first shall be last." I am now, gentlemen, performing the part of the "cad" to the concern. But remember this—it is the guard, who sits behind, who looks after the property of the vehicle. I accept that. We have heard something of the issues on which this contest has been fought. Well, from the time when I saw the great coalition on both sides against me, I did not begin to "funk," but I began to have doubts as to the security of my position. I acknowledge the great popularity of your present senior member—he is, in fact, the real working-man's candidate of Nottingham. There is no use in disputing that. ("Why didn't you go with him?" "You should have gone with him.") Our principles are different. I acknowledge the high standing, the local acquaintance, his position in connexion with the Robin Hoods, and the county, and I think you have chosen a good man in Colonel Wright. I don't know, if he had other principles, whether you could have had a better. I don't like his principles, but he has got something about him I like. I like his wife. (The hon. gentleman then shook hands with Mrs. Wright, who sat near him.) And from the

the election. All parties admitted that his farewell to Nottingham from the hustings was a model of a good-moment when I saw two of the handsomest, two of the best, and two of the most winning women in Great Britain come into this town in the shape of Lady Clifton and Mrs. Wright, I wrote to my wife and said "It's all U.P. with me." Gentlemen, we hear of bribery at elections, and I accuse you, Mrs. Wright (turning to that lady), of having won people by the witchery of your smiles, and I accuse Lady Clifton of having made her husband what he is by her winning ways and charitable hand—(cheers and laughter, during which Mr. Osborne stooped and kissed Mrs. Wright's hand). Ah, gentlemen, I don't wonder at Sir Robert telling you he would vote for woman suffrage. He has every reason for doing so, and if Colonel Wright don't support him he ought to be turned out at the next election. Well, I have been deceived by some people; I am defeated, but I am not disgraced. I have been beaten by two women whose equals you could not find in the world. I accept the decision. I am very much in the position of the classical tyrant who invented a machine which he thought would be for his own benefit and for the benefit of the people. I did not invent, but I was among the earliest supporters of household suffrage, and a nice thing I have got by it! The same thing has happened to me as to many inventors—I have been blown up by the very instrument I supported. Well, I don't complain. It is very easy to laugh when you win, but the great art of the philosopher is to be a mountebank when you lose. Of course there is some vexation at being defeated, no man likes it. I don't like it, and at the same time I have been so good naturedly beaten!—patted on the back by my opponents, and smiled on by my most inveterate foes—that I shall go away with a very cordial remembrance of both my friends and my opponents. Some mistakes have been committed in this contest. The whole thing, as Lord Derby said of his Reform Bill, has been a leap in the dark—and what a leap I have made of it! All I can say is "better luck next time." I now wish to speak in sober sadness on a certain topic. I make no accusations of bribery at all. You know it is rather the part of a beaten candidate to put himself in a temper, shake his finger, and say that if you had not done so and so I should have got in. I am very sure of this, that I could not have got in. I am perfectly convinced of that. Quite satisfied. But let me give you one parting word of advice. I had the pleasure of being here during your municipal elections, and I saw what took place then. While you have town councillors (a voice: "Town scoundrels") debauching you with bribes for municipal honours, you will never have prudent men or great political characters come near your town. You know that at your municipal elections you are bought and sold. You know it. (Cries of "You're right.") Now, I know nothing of this contest in that point of view, but I believe that Sir Robert Clifton could win if he had only half-a-crown in his pocket—that is to say—when his wife is at his side too. I don't wonder, either, at Colonel Wright being returned; if his principles were different, he is the natural member for your town. Recommended by undoubted local advantages, and his weight of character,

humoured and courageous address.¹ His tribute to the influence of Mrs. Wright and Lady Clifton roused

he is the natural member for a town like Nottingham if the people are Conservative in their tendencies. (Cries, "We are.") Well, be conservative of your honour as well as of your political principles, and if you are Conservative, don't take money at municipal elections. It is a bad training for the Parliamentary arena. A man who takes 5s. from a town councillor will naturally think a member of Parliament a far more valuable animal and ask something higher. ("Right.") I only give you this as my parting word of advice. I don't presume to question the purity of this election. I know nothing about it, except that I was offered fifty votes for 60s. I refused the offer, not that I consider I am so much better than my fellows, because the Lord knows when a man is in difficulties he will do anything. But I felt I was clean gone. I was offered, also, 200 votes in a certain Ward, which I will not mention. (A voice : Byron Ward.) I did not say so. I think you are one of the men, and, I must say, sir, that you look very cheap for the money. Those 200 men wanted 2s. 6d. each, but it was then, you know, half-past three o'clock, and they wanted 1l. a head in the morning. I would have nothing to do with them, however. I don't know what became of them, but all that comes from your infernal system of electing town councillors. Get right in that. It is the fashion of many people to flatter you ; I flatter no man, I abuse no man, but I say you never can be a great, glorious, and free borough while you have this canker on you at municipal elections. Now, gentlemen, I have finished. ("No, go on.") How can I proceed? Why, the funeral is over. The ceremony has taken place ; I have been a mourner at my own political decease, but you cannot say, gentlemen, that I have been a mute. No ; I have followed the deceased with reverence to the grave ; and I take my leave of the living with gratitude and admiration for their good behaviour, and thanks to all my friends.'

¹ From the *Nottingham Daily Guardian*, November 20, 1868 :—'Of the defeated candidates, at their farewell of the hustings, we have no wish to speak harshly—we would fain, indeed, not speak of them even unkindly. They have one and all, we trust, learned lessons of valuable practical instruction from the contest in which they and their cause have met with such discomfiture—instruction both political, moral, and social. Even the "Nottingham Lambs" on this occasion furnished them with some materials for thinking which, let us hope, they will seriously mark, learn, and inwardly digest. Of one of them, however, we could not, if we would, speak harshly or unkindly. Mr. Bernal Osborne's conduct has from the first, and all along, been so straightforward, so forbearing, and altogether so honourable, as to have extorted even from his opponents the warmest respect ; and on many accounts, Liberal though he be, we send him away defeated with real and deep regret. We may say of him with perfect truth, as regards his political existence here in Nottingham,

an enthusiasm amongst the assembled thousands which equalled the *furore* which first greeted him in the selfsame market-place eighteen months ago. Bernal Osborne is remembered now in Nottingham equally by his last and by his first appearance in public, but perhaps the sentiment of the people was more deeply touched by the gallant tenderness of his farewell than by all the quips and fun and jests with which he enlivened for a brief space their political affairs.

The Independent party in Nottingham, however, that "nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it." A more generous, a more magnanimous, and, at the same time, a more graceful leave-taking it would have been impossible to make—or one more chivalrous, or more gallant either. That there should be tears of sorrow, as well as smiles of delight, on such an occasion, as we know there were, could surprise no one—smiles under the delight which so much generosity, gracefulness, and gallantry excited; but tears of sorrow at the thought of having to part repulsively with one so genial, so jovial, and altogether so noble. It is not enough to say of Mr. Bernal Osborne that "he is a fellow of infinite humour," and one who can "set the table"—aye—or the hustings—"in a roar." He is far more, and far higher than that. His graceful and gallant acknowledgment of the great gentleness, yet irresistible force, of those influences which the two ladies so immediately and unavoidably opposed to the Liberal candidates, and to himself as one of them, was something exquisite, at once in its humour, in its heartiness, and in its sensibility. They were no empty compliments he felt constrained to pay to two such ladies. And although, as became a gallant gentleman, he did full justice to the "witchery of their smiles," we have no doubt he deeply felt that even such an influence could never have had the effect it so evidently has had, but for the inherent goodness of the cause in behalf of which they were exerted. There is not one, then, of the farewells of the hustings that has produced half the depth of emotion which Mr. Bernal Osborne's has done. We do not part with him, we say it sincerely, without considerable regret—a feeling which is in no slight degree aggravated by the recollection of how his own party, or the largest portion of them, have disgraced themselves by ill-using him. They will live to see, or we are much mistaken—if they do not see it already—that they might have "better spared a better man." As to the hon. gentleman himself, however, he is well relieved of so unworthy a connexion; and there is no doubt we shall soon hear of him in Parliament again, where even his temporary absence cannot fail to be regretted by his own party, and more or less keenly felt on both sides of the House.'

were determined to show publicly in what estimation they held the man who had twice so gallantly fought their battles. They not only subscribed to pay all his expenses, but at a banquet in the December following a large number of Osborne's friends and admirers entertained him royally in the Exchange Hall. It was on this occasion that he made the celebrated defence of his principles, and retorted with such vigour the favourite taunt of fickleness which, owing to his continual change of constituency, was so frequently levelled at him.¹

¹ The *Nottingham Journal*, December 9, 1868 :—' So much for the formation of the Cabinet ; and now, gentlemen, before I am shunted to the solitary siding of private life, may I be allowed to say one word upon a subject upon which it is said that all men are eloquent, and few agreeable—I mean myself. Gentlemen, you have lately had a chapter of autobiography from the Prime Minister. Why should I not give you a leaf of my autobiography ? I will not give you a chapter. But, gentlemen, I am a little anxious on this point, as I have succumbed to political misfortune, and as my epitaph has been written in many quarters during the last few weeks, an epitaph to which I cannot object, for I think that, generally, the judgments passed upon my conduct and character have been far above my desert. Still, there are, I say, two subjects upon which I wish to say a few words, and to offer not apologies but excuses. It is said that not only during the election here, but during my career, I have not been a perfect man, that I have been too apt to change my constituents, and more fond of enlivening debate than of ensuring conviction. Allow me to say, gentlemen, with regard to the first charge, that of changing my constituents, it has never been at my own wish. It was my misfortune, and I am glad to have the opportunity of this explanation. It has been my misfortune to have had a varied experience in that respect, and in this I have been equalled by two of the greatest men of the day—Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli, who have had the same number of constituencies that I have. But with this difference, gentlemen, that whereas they have rather altered their views, I have sat for three or four places on one set of principles. I will tell you, gentlemen, why I have been compelled to change those seats ; I will take you into my confidence—I will not tell everybody. Gentlemen, it was not the elected that was inconstant, it was the electors who were inconstant. It is hard enough, gentlemen, for a man who is not overburdened with fortune, who cannot call cousins with Dukes, and has no great trading connexions—it is hard enough for him to get into Parliament at all.

But the regret expressed at his exclusion from Parliament was much wider than what was felt in

Ah, who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar?

But, gentlemen, when you get into the Parliamentary temple it is equally hard to remain there. I will tell you why it has been so in my case. I have always endeavoured to preserve an independent position. Though a party man, I have never been a party devotee. Probably I have been more faithful to party principles than amenable to party discipline. Well, that independence which is so praised by poets and philosophers is not much admired by electors. I found at a place, which shall be nameless, but it was a seaport town, that when I went to be their member—it is true I was the Secretary of the Admiralty then—I was the idol of the place; they brought me in at the top of the poll, and worshipped me whenever I went. But, gentlemen, there came an alteration. I left my place and became again independent; instantly my virtues vanished, though my principles were the same. The next time I went to election I was at the bottom of the poll, was thought very little of, and people hinted that they did not want an independent member there. Now, gentlemen, that is the history of my change of seats. But although there are certain disadvantages in political life in being a rolling stone, though you gather no moss, still it has this great advantage to a reflecting mind—that you accumulate no political pollution of Parliamentary impurities. Now, gentlemen, allow me to say one word as to my talent for enlivening debates, to which I plead guilty, and wish I had never uttered a joke in my life. No man is more sensible than I am of the drawbacks of a good digestion and a mirthful temperament. Often have I envied the phlegmatic porer over blue-books; often have I envied the utterer of pompous platitudes, for those, gentlemen, are the industrious bees held up as models to the drones like myself, those are the men who look down upon me because I have endeavoured to lighten the debates. But to acquire a position in the House of Commons, whether grave or gay, you must give constant attendance and great application. What is called light speaking has probably cost many an hour of labour previously. But, gentlemen, I have paid the penalty allotted to all jokers of jokes. My bad jests are brought up in judgment against me, and my good votes are totally forgotten. But I can truly say, in returning into private life—(cries of “No, no,” “We will send you back to Parliament”);—well, you know you failed to put me there again. (“I wish we could,” and cheers.) I repeat, I can truly say that while I was in Parliament I never sought a favour from the “Whip,” or craved anything from the Minister. No man has given the Secretary to the Treasury so little trouble; no Minister has been sought by me, not even when I had the opportunity. Gentlemen, I have been a volunteer, not a camp follower. I have shared in the assault, but I never cared to ask for a share in the spoil. Honours

Nottingham. The public press deplored his loss, and the House of Commons felt as though it had been shorn of one of its most indispensable institutions.¹

are nothing to me. I have no ambition to buy a peerage for the good of my party, or any wish to be "Sirred" for the openness of my hand. But I have one ambition—I have an ambition which can only be gratified in one way. The only honour I have sought, the only distinction I have prized, has been that which can be given only by the people of this country. That, gentlemen, has been refused to me; but I shall continue ever to esteem the proudest position for a British gentleman to be that of a member of the British Parliament; and if, gentlemen, as a sound Protestant and a good subject, I fear God and honour the Queen, I do not the less acknowledge my ambition, but I bow to the people because they are the only source which can give me the title which is at once my desire and my ambition. Gentlemen, that was my object on a recent occasion, and when I see so many faces around me, when I have your enthusiastic plaudits ringing in my ears, I cannot but ask myself how it was that I lost the election? But this I know, that I was actuated by no mere selfish ambition. I offered on the eve of the election to resign if it was agreeable to my committee. I put myself entirely into their hands, and I felt the misfortune, as it was, of fighting a battle against men with whom I ought naturally to be allied. I regret the circumstances, and, perhaps, if one could have been wise before the event as well as after it, I should not have done so; but this I hope, that it will go forth from this room that I have no ill-will, no malice to those who thought it was their duty to oppose me, and that I may ask them in the name of our common country to join in reconciliation for the sake not only of Nottingham, but for the sake of the great Liberal cause of this country.'

¹ 'Other familiar faces will be sought in vain in the new Assembly. Of Mr. Bernal Osborne we cannot forbear to say that he was emphatically a good member of Parliament—true to his leader; steadfast in his Liberal faith; a thorough man of the world, yet not an idler or dilettante; a thorough party man, yet never a mere party parasite. Vigilant, attentive, fond of the game of politics, but far more serious than he seemed when real work was to be done; merciless in banter, when banter could be wise; never failing in respect to men who deserved it; not incapable of argument and convictions, though always ready to light up a lingering debate with a rocket-fire of jokes, Mr. Bernal Osborne is eminently one of those of whom allies and adversaries alike would say that they could better spare a better man. Mr. Roebuck was often complimented, and often censured, for saying what no one else would dare to say. Nothing could be more true than this of Mr. Osborne. But with this important difference, that what Mr. Roebuck said was often what no one ought to say, and that which Mr. Osborne said was often what every one was glad

At Newmarket and at Gunnersbury, and at many other friends' houses the defeated candidate sought forgetfulness and relaxation after the excitement and annoyance of political strife. During the next year he had ample time for rest and recreation, both of which he was sadly in need of. Osborne had mental and physical resources which stood him in good stead while he was out of the House. He had his farm at Newtown Anner, and his pheasant preserves, while his love of horses provoked him to frequent expeditions to race-meetings or to fairs and agricultural shows. Thus he passed the winter pleasantly in country pursuits, returning to London, as was his wont, in the season with his wife and daughters. The Reform Club was his favourite resort, and in the vestibule he met all his Parliamentary acquaintances. He was a regular whist-player, and divided his time between the card-room and the library. But without a seat in the House of Commons life was to him only half worth living, and accordingly he scrutinized the bye elections assiduously with a view to returning once more to his accustomed place in Parliament. The opportunity came at last, and Osborne determined to turn his back upon England and seek his fortune at an Irish constituency.

to hear. Let us hope that he will make his appearance again in the House as the representative of a Liberal constituency and not of Tory "lambs."—*The Express*, November 18, 1868.

CHAPTER XXV.

WATERFORD. FIRST ELECTION.

AT the general election of 1868 Mr. John A. Blake and Mr. Delahunty had been returned for Waterford City, Sir John Winston Barron, Bart., having unsuccessfully contested the constituency. In the autumn of 1869 Mr. Blake accepted a Government office. Here was Osborne's opportunity, and he lost no time in issuing an address to the electors of Waterford. Several candidates at first made their appearance, but finally the only antagonist left was Sir Henry Barron, Bart., a gentleman whose family was well known in Waterford, and who had contested the constituency with varying success no less than ten times.

Waterford is built on the southern bank of the river Suir. Its quay is the centre of the social and commercial life of the town. All the principal hotels are situated there, and by way of it the railways are approached. The quay, in fact, is the distinctive characteristic of the city, which is built at the back of it upon rising ground. Whenever any popular excitement is on foot the stream of life naturally flows down to this broad thoroughfare, which forms a convenient base of operations for municipal, social, or political affairs. During election times in former days it is hardly necessary to say that the state of the quay generally gave a correct indication of the popular mind. But in the

contest between Bernal Osborne and Sir Henry Barron there was no very great excitement. Neither candidate attracted the enthusiasm of the mob militant, and popular feeling never once rose to the height of personal violence. The fact was that the Fenian party in Waterford, always a strong element in local Irish politics, favoured neither the English Radical nor the Irish Whig. There was no Nationalist candidate to arouse their enthusiasm, and they had no further interest in the matter probably than to amuse themselves at the expense of both Barron and Osborne.

Still, during the canvass, Osborne made many friends by his ready repartees and witty remarks, which were thoroughly appreciated by the quick-witted Waterford folk. For instance, there were two voters, brothers, of the name of Bowe. One had already promised his vote to Osborne. The second proved reluctant. 'Come, come,' said Osborne, in his quick, off-hand manner, 'under other circumstances I should be quite content to have two strings to my bow, but on the present occasion I must insist on having at least two Bowes to my string.' The vote was promised at once.

On Ballybricken hill, a part of the city which was largely inhabited by the labouring classes of the population, Osborne addressed a great open-air public meeting, and was accorded a capital hearing by the Ballybricken 'boys,' as they were familiarly called, a horny-handed body of quay porters and pigstickers, who believed that force was an excellent remedy in certain cases. The political question in which the Waterford masses took the greatest interest at this time was the proposal to amnesty the Fenian prisoners, and on being questioned as to what he would do in the matter, Osborne gave his adhesion

to the principle of clemency to political offenders. This was in accordance with his old views, and also probably conduced in some degree to his transient popularity. At all events, he became the favourite candidate, where neither raised any enthusiasm, and his great reputation as a speaker soon secured him the ear of an essentially speech-loving people.¹

¹ The following street ballad was sung along the quay during the election :—

OSBORNE AND BARRON.

Ye citizens, draw near,
A song you all shall hear,
And I'll sing it without fear,
Says the Shan Van Vocht.

Old Barron is done brown,
For he wants to sell your town,
But we'll surely put him down,
Says the Shan Van Vocht.

If you want to make to flight
For homes and tenant right,
'Twill soon put him to flight,
Says the Shan Van Vocht.

Oh ! he has an ugly way
To make wretched tenants pay
All on the quarter day,
Says the Shan Van Vocht.

They're a family of note,
But don't give them your vote,
For they hang you for a goat,*
Says the Shan Van Vocht.

If you wish to keep down rent,
No better can be sent,
Than Osborne to Parliament—
Says the Shan Van Vocht.

* Sir Henry Barron's brother, a County Court Judge, did actually sentence a man to death for stealing a goat, such being the penalty under an unpealed Irish statute.

The Court House in Waterford, where the nomination took place, is divided into two Courts, neither of which could accommodate a large assembly, and in one of these the candidates were nominated. Nomination Day at an Irish election, under the old system, was everywhere considered by the lower orders of the people a kind of political saturnalia, during which a certain amount of freedom of tongue, fist, and stick was not merely allowed, but deemed absolutely necessary. The leaders of the people at such a time are developed by a sort of natural selection. There is hardly a city in Ireland where there are not several semi-public personages who blaze out into notoriety during moments of political excitement, and distinguish themselves by their reckless license of speech and lawless insubordination of conduct. Such a one was a 'chap' (to use the expressive Irish phrase) in Waterford known as Red Lights, who, in company with a band of kindred spirits, had taken a prominent place in the gallery of the Court House, determined, moreover, to take a prominent part in the proceedings. In front of the gallery stood the candidates and their supporters, where the judge sat at the assizes, while the rest of the body of the Court House was choked with a seething, sweltering mass of people, many of them with shillelaghs in hand, and all talking, shouting, laughing, or quarrelling together. Sir Henry Barron was first

If this good work you'll do,
You may be sure he will be true,
And send the prisoners back to you,
Says the Shan Van Vocht.

Three cheers, then, and hurrah !
For we'll surely gain the day,
And make Barron run away,
Says the Shan Van Vocht.

proposed and seconded, and rose to speak amid a terrible uproar. Indeed, he was scarce heard, partly owing to his indistinct utterance, and partly to the continual interruptions in the gallery.

At last, so difficult was it for Sir Henry to gain a hearing that Osborne jumped up, and, coming forward, shouted to the gallery, 'If you won't hear Sir Henry Barron, of course you won't hear me. If you don't hear him I won't address you.' Upon this from the gallery came a voice, 'To the devil with the whole of you,' and after some more confusion the baronet was allowed to proceed. But it was only for a very few minutes. Red Lights had been outrageously pertinacious in his interruptions, and now led an attack which was intended to close Sir Henry's speech for ever. The colloquy, as reported in the local press, which followed is characteristic of all parties :—

Red Lights—Hurraw for Grubb, the poor man's friend.¹

Another voice—Come on, if you please, Mr. Osborne—speak up.

Red Lights (waving his cap)—What's the whole world to a man if his wife's a widow?

Another voice—Three times three for O'Donovan Rossa.

Another voice—And for Captain Mackey, be the hokey.

Mr. Osborne—'Tis one man only that is interrupting Sir Henry Barron—I have my eye on him—he ought to be turned out—'tis you, Red Lights—and if you are men you will turn him out.

Red Lights (indignantly)—Go to blazes, man; didn't I cheer for you?—I'm here to support the tenant-farmer.

Mr. Osborne—Red Lights, will you hold your tongue?

Red Lights—Turn me out! I defy you or e'er a man, except the peelers, to turn me out.

Berwick—Shut up, boy, and hear the gentleman—he's comin' on.

¹ Mr. Grubb was a local candidate who had withdrawn.

Red Lights—We'll hear you, Mr. Osborne, my boy, and three cheers for the poor man's friend all through. Let Sir Henry finish whatever he's chattin' about.

[At this point Red Lights, with clothes all disordered, opened out his arms and fell back upon his admirers, who carried him to the rear. His place was taken, after a scuffle, by another orator who came to the front, cheering for Captain Mackey and O'Donovan Rossa.]

A voice—We'll have two new members—Captain Mackey and Mr. Osborne; if only one (after a pause), let it be Mr. Osborne.

Mr. Osborne—Now, as you are all in a very good humour, let me request you, as a personal favour, to listen patiently to what Sir Henry Barron has to say. Without your allowing him to speak, I'll have nothing to say.

Red Lights (coming on again with a rush)—Why don't you give us a touch yourself?

Another voice—Finish up, Sir Henry; we're tired of you. I'm tired of you since I was a little boy. Go ahead now; I remember the goat, old fellow.

Once again Sir Henry essayed to speak, but again he was silenced by the 'boys' in the gallery, who poured forth a volley of questions.

A Cattle Driver on the gallery—Answer me this—who gave the keys to the Beresfords?

Another voice—Pat Anthony is a great man, and so is Corney Redmond.

The Cattle Driver—Electors, I asked a question, and he won't answer. The moment he gets elected, his back is turned, and no more about him. I have a divil of a speech to make (good boy you are).

A Young Lad on the gallery—We'll have no member but Captain Mackey, the friend of O'Donovan Rossa.

Another voice—Paddy, give Grubb the purse.

Sir Henry being noticed taking a glass of water, a 'voice' called out—Give poor Sir Henry a glass of wine; take it, man.

Berwick—Am I as good a citizen as any man?—Who says no? Dam little fear of any man sayin' no.

Some of his neighbours seized Berwick, and in friendly sport gave him a rough handling; and there was a good deal of 'batting' and boxing, all out of fun and to vary the pastime.

Sir Henry then declared he was for larger employment and higher wages for the people, and also for an advance for a dry dock.

A female voice—Give him a ha'porth of milk.

This final shaft was almost too much for the aged baronet, and after a few more efforts he sat down. Osborne rose while the gallery was still disorderly, but at the first few words every voice was hushed. He commenced by a tribute to the late member, Mr. John A. Blake, and then went on to answer the charge which had been made against him of being a stranger.

It has been whispered (he said) in your town that I am a stranger to Ireland. A stranger to Ireland! I have done all I could to advocate the principles you advocate by shouting indistinctly, by marrying the best Irishwoman I could get hold of. Now, I ask you is that being a stranger? (No.) On the contrary I have had the nurse in my house welcoming little Irish strangers, and I have two fine bouncing young Irishwomen that I am sure Sir Henry Barron—an admirer of Irishwomen—would not call strangers. Gentlemen, what is birth but an accident? It may be so that there may be an accident of an accident by birth. There are Irishmen with Norman names and neutral hearts, who talk loudly of their being Irishmen, but who have nothing Irish but the brogue at the tip of their tongue.

At this remark Osborne was interrupted by a supporter of Sir Henry Barron, a local dyer, of a saturnine countenance, who said, 'Retract that for an

Irish audience.' 'I have a brogue myself,' retorted Osborne, 'and I must trouble you to hold your tongue.' The inevitable voice in the gallery here shouted, 'He wants to get dyed, sir!' 'And that reminds me,' said Osborne, catching at the idea, of a quotation by an Irishman,

We soldiers, why should we be melancholy?
Whose duty 'tis to *die*.

This hit delivered so rapidly, with the hand outstretched at the poor dyer, whose melancholy aspect gave point to the quotation, was hailed with vociferous approbation, and Osborne received no further interruption. He concluded his speech by saying:—

I am, it is true, an Englishman, but an Englishman who sympathises with your wants and your feelings, and I would hail your nationality. And whether it may be your pleasure to return me for your member, or send me back to my retirement within an hour and a half of your town, I shall be sensible of the reception you have given me on this occasion and shall ever say openly and privately, 'God save Ireland!'

The orator sat down amidst the most enthusiastic cheering from the Ballybricken 'boys' in the gallery, who with one accord held up their unenfranchised fists, and the show of hands was accordingly entirely in his favour. Before leaving the court, Osborne held out his hand to the dyer, who jumped on the table and shook it cordially amid great laughter and cheering. Thus ended the first part of the business. The polling day, however, reversed the verdict of the nomination. Not all the varied experiences of such an old political campaigner as Bernal Osborne were able to cope with the more substantial arguments of Sir Henry Barron, and the poll was declared in his favour.

Sir Henry Barron, Bart.	487
R. Bernal Osborne . . .	471
Majority . . .	<u>16</u>

Osborne's answer to his defeat was published in the local press, and the characteristic heading which he placed to it, 'To the Unpurchaseable Electors of the City of Waterford,' showed clearly enough by what influence he believed the election to have been carried. He lost no time in presenting a petition against the return of Sir Henry Barron, and on trial before Baron Hughes bribery was proved and the baronet was unseated. Osborne's claim to the seat was disallowed, and thus a fresh election was necessitated. That he felt his defeat most bitterly there can be no doubt. His chief friend and supporter in the town was Dr. James Scott, an eloquent speaker and a man of high ability and culture. To him Osborne said bitterly when the result was known : 'I started in the race of life with many colleagues ; some of these have become Cabinet ministers, others entered the peerage, and a few, as the last resource of noble minds, have accepted baronetcies. And here I am, and because I preserved my honour and independence, and was willing to toady to no man, still plain Ralph Bernal Osborne—the rejected of Waterford constituency.'

But beyond the mere momentary feeling of bitterness and disappointment there was the feeling that the very people and country for whose cause he had borne a great deal of political ostracism had refused to remember his disinterested votes and action during twenty years. This was 'the most unkindest cut' of all, and he felt it deeply. But Osborne was not the man to be cast down for long, and he determined to play the game once again. His motto in life might well have been :—

He either fears his fate too much
Or his desert is small,
Who fears to put it to the touch
To win or lose it all.

Fear he had none at any time, and on this occasion he continued to believe that his services to Ireland might still count for something.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PRIVATE LIFE. VERSE-MAKING.

IN the meantime, before a new writ was issued, Osborne was invited in the last week of the year 1869, with his eldest daughter, to pay a visit to his old friend, the Countess of Waldegrave, who was then presiding at the Chief Secretary's lodge in Dublin. A private theatrical performance formed part of the entertainment and Bernal Osborne lent all the aid of his dramatic criticism to make the representation a success. *Betsy Baker* and *To Paris and Back for Five Pounds* were the pieces selected,¹ to the former of which Osborne wrote the following prologue :—

¹ The casts were as follows :—

BETSY BAKER; OR, TOO ATTENTIVE BY HALF.

Mr. Marmaduke . . .	Mr. Ward Braham.
Mr. Crummy . . .	Captain Cox, A.D.C.
Mrs. Mouser . . .	The Hon. Mrs. E. Boyle.
Betsy Baker . . .	Miss Le Fanu.

TO PARIS AND BACK FOR FIVE POUNDS.

Mr. Samuel Snuzzle . . .	Mr. Ward Braham.
Mr. Spriggins . . .	Captain Cox, A.D.C.
Mr. Charles Markham . . .	Mr. F. Le Poer Trench.
Lieutenant Spike . . .	Mr. Arthur Courtenay.
Pounce (a detective officer) . . .	Lord Norreys.
Joseph (a waiter) . . .	Captain F. Seymour, A.D.C.
Superintendent . . .	Mr. Frederick Manders.
Telegraphic Clerk . . .	Mr. J. Hayes Q. Lane.
Miss Fanny Spriggins . . .	Miss Burke.

[*Prompter's Bell ringing : Enter Stage Manager.*]

Silence that bell ! don't draw the curtain yet,
 Betsy is dressing ! and the scene's not set.
 The wigs are missing ! and amid the stir
 I am at once—call-boy and manager !

Alas ! what cares that luckless wight endures
 Who lists in yonder troop of amateurs !
 'Tis sad to tell the perils which ensnare me
 Behind the scenes—they rival Tipperary !
 'Look out, below !'—some stern celestial said—
 A wood, descending, totters o'er my head !
 Quick to avoid, I meet a fresh mishap—
 Upset the thunder, and fall thro' a trap !

'Tis hard to form a Ministry, folks say—
 But much more puzzling to select a play.
 Some men are bashful, and some ladies shy ;
 Whilst low comedians go for tragedy !
 All on the prompter reckon, as you'll hear—
 'Though lost to sight, he is to mem'ry dear !'

I come this eve your kind support to ask :
 To please such judges is no easy task.
 A lady claims indulgence—don't forsake her,
 But give your hearts and hands to Betsy Baker ;
 And, when your plaudits with their fire rouse her,
 Remember me—forlorn and henpecked Mouser !

[*Bell rings.*]

One moment, ere I go—To all friends here,
 A Merry Christmas and a Brand New Year !

A second performance was given not long afterwards, consisting of *The Young Widow* and *Box and*

Cox, and again Osborne wrote some lines in the shape of an epilogue.¹

Well, all is finished ! Splash will dance no more,
 The Widow's wedded, and the season's o'er !
 Both Box and Cox some other rooms must get,
 Now Mrs. Bouncer's ' Lodgings are to Let !'
 But, ere this house be closed, I humbly pray
 For mercy to the players, and the play !
 Should there, amid yon crowd, in ambush sit
 Some captious critic or malicious wit,
 Who scans our actors with too keen an eye,
 We throw ourselves upon your clemency !
 If some are wanting in dramatic arts,
 Surely the softer sex have won your hearts.
 Who can deny the well-earned merit due
 To graceful Boyle, and lively Le Fanu !
 Spare, then, your satire ! do not vex a body ;
 But bid a kind farewell to Pillicoddy !
 To him the credit for this night's success—
 He plann'd alike our scenery and dress !
 A ladies' man ! tho' at rehearsals sage
 He reigns alone, the Atlas of our stage !
 Prompter ! and painter ! ever near at hand,
 To rouge a cheek, or dance a saraband !

But one there is for whom I gladly claim
 Your special notice ; need I tell her name ?
 Whether by Twickenham's classic site she dwells,
 Or near the Phoenix weaves her social spells,

¹ THE YOUNG WIDOW.

Mandeville	Mr. Arthur Courtenay.
Splash (his valet)	Mr. Ward Braham.
Aurelia Fairlove (a young widow)	Miss Le Fanu.
Lucy (her attendant)	Miss Osborne.

BOX AND COX.

John Box (a journeyman printer)	Mr. Frederick Manders.
James Cox (a journeyman hatter)	Mr. F. Le Poer Trench.
Mrs. Bouncer (a lodging-house keeper)	Miss Osborne.

Where'er she goes she adds new zest to life,
 A generous hostess, and true-hearted wife !
 Long may she live, these revels to renew,
 And grace the genial home of Fortescue !

We have already, in an earlier chapter, adverted to and illustrated Osborne's love of poetry. From time to time in a desultory manner he continued to write verses, and he has left copies of various lines which he addressed to friends on special occasions. Probably the best lyrical effort of his life is the following, written in early life ; it is full of genuine sentiment and pathos :—

LINES

What phantasy enthralls my sense ?
 Youth's earliest passions gone,
 I never knew the love intense
 Which finds the world in one.

Away with thought ! with pleasure's throng
 I'll mingle, and be free ;
 'Tis vain ! amid the tide of song
 My heart leaps back to thee !

Why is it that those silvery tones
 Still linger in my ear !
 And that my thrilling bosom owns
 No care, if thou art near ?

I've look'd on eyes as bright as thine,
 But never woo'd their beams,
 Nor wished to call the owners mine
 In truant Fancy's dreams :

But now I feel my gaze is weak
 And trembles 'neath thine eye,
 Whilst oft my bosom burns to speak
 Thoughts it can only sigh !

I ask not if 'tis morn, or eve,
 So I am by thy side ;
 Alas, those silken tresses weave
 Strong chains for captive pride !

Day after day I proudly vow
 To fly the witching spell,
 Yet daily look upon thy brow
 And cannot say farewell !

The sun may shine on forms as fair,
 The earth hold hearts as true ;
 But tell me not what others are,
 I've found *my* world in *you*.

One of Osborne's favourite quotations which he used frequently on the platform was Pope's line, 'And beauty draws us with a single hair.' He developed the thought, and produced the following thereon :—

*'AND BEAUTY DRAWS US WITH A SINGLE
 HAIR.'*

Love's strongest chain ! a silken curl doth hold
 The key of memory in its fragile tress ;
 For in the golden winding of this fold
 There lives a charm against forgetfulness.

Sketched by an artist's hand the portrait smiles
 Her own bright smile ; the canvas needs but breath,
 Yet 'tis a copy. This, herself, beguiles
 The pangs of absence, miniature of death.

The old-fashioned attention of turning a few couplets in compliment to a fair lady was a favourite occupation with Osborne, and he excelled in what was once considered a necessity of polite education. All the lines here given were thus written :—

TO A LADY, WITH CLAY'S RULES OF WHIST,

Accept, most charming Queen of Hearts,
 Some rules this book discloses ;
 A science Mr. Clay imparts,
 Through laws unknown to Moses !

Happy the man who, free from blame,
 Can cut and not offend you !
 May skill with temper guide your game,
 While Kings and Queens befriend you !

TO A CAPRICIOUS BEAUTY.

Let critics declare that the wind
 Shifts as oft as the smile on your cheek ;
 They are all in the wrong, for I find
 The breeze has not changed for a week !

LINES TO —¹

(With a Berlin umbrella.)

Despise not, dear lady, the trifle I send,
 Though its shelter be feeble and vain ;
 Ever ready at need, 'tis the type of a friend,
 To be used both in sunshine and rain !

For winter and summer—in showers and heat
 With all seasons, you'll borrow its aid,
 Then if 'neath the shadow you find a retreat,
 May the donor not fall in the shade !

¹ These lines appeared in the *Keepsake*, 1844. In the same number there appeared a tale by Bernal Osborne's father, called 'Anthony Forster.'

*A NEW YEAR'S OFFERING TO MRS. ARTHUR
KENNARD.*

(With a chain from Cashmere.)

A form from the Greek in the costume of France,
You resemble Minerva deprived of her lance !
For that goddess, though wise, was not free from alarms,
So the ancients depicted her always in arms !
And great was the crowd in her temple to pay
Their tribute and homage on each New Year's day.
Both Princes and Pachas were found in the throng,
Egyptians from Cairo, Chinese from Hong-Kong.
The painters brought sketches, and verses the Bards,
Whilst Princes sent bon-bons with picturesque cards,
To honour the goddess at Mrs. Kennard's !
One votary only, a fool for his pains,
In ignorance sought to secure her by chains,
And seeking for fetters in distant Cashmere
He sends them, and wishes a happy new year.

1879.

R. O.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SECOND WATERFORD ELECTION.

WHEN Parliament met in February a writ was forthwith moved for Waterford, and Osborne once more came forward as a candidate. He had already suffered in more than one constituency from the effects of bribery, and at Nottingham he had seen a certain amount of rough horse-play. The contest which now impended was destined to give him a new experience in mob violence, which was never surpassed even in Ireland, where politics are more of a passion than a science.

Several candidates appeared to solicit the honour of representing Waterford, *Urbs intacta*, as her motto proclaims her to be. Sir Henry Barron again presented himself, but did not persevere. Sir John Ennis published an address, but did not go further than paying his printer's bill. Mr. Crean,¹ a barrister on the Leinster circuit, with some local interest, was also a candidate; but, though he injured Osborne's prospects as much as possible by the grossest misrepresentation and calumnies, he did not go to the poll, and was looked upon as merely a warming-pan for somebody else. The antagonist who finally fought out the election with Osborne was Mr. Patrick J. Smyth, the present member for Tipperary, a gentleman possessing great powers of passionate eloquence, and one whose political career was calculated to enlist all the

¹ Now a sub-commissioner under the Land Act of 1881.

sympathies of the Nationalists of Ballybricken. Mr. Smyth had been one of the 'men of '48'—intimately acquainted with John Mitchell in Dublin, and forced to fly the country to America, escaping under the guise of a frieze-coated peasant in a Galway emigrant ship. In New York he lived precariously for some time: 'editing a paper in Pittsburgh, agitating in the New York *Sun* the Nicaragua railroad question, and striving to rile up the American mind against England thereupon; in short, discharging all the duties and functions of a true rebel and refugee.' Such is Mitchell's account. Mr. Smyth ultimately left America with the avowed intention of rescuing John Mitchell from his captivity in Tasmania. How successfully this was accomplished and what part he took in the enterprise have been fully recounted by the great Irish revolutionist in his remarkable 'Jail Journal.'¹ Suffice it to say that, as a Nationalist candidate for Waterford, the friend and rescuer of Mitchell was received with open arms by the most advanced politicians in that city, and the most advanced of all were the Ballybricken 'boys.'

A very few days had elapsed before it was evident that the contest was to be conducted on physical force principles. All the respectable portion of the voting community, together with the great mercantile representatives of the city, were in favour of Osborne. Catholics remembered that he had suffered in his Middlesex elections owing to his tolerant views upon Catholic questions, and to the active part he took in Parliament to thwart the religious bigotry which was then rampant, and many of them considered that any efforts they made to secure his return were only just

¹ *Jail Journal*, by John Mitchell, p. 270 (Glasgow: Cameron and Ferguson).

payments of a debt of gratitude. But what Mr. Bright called 'the residuum' was in favour of Mr. Smyth. It was a battle of passion against principle, and the result was a lamentable spectacle of confusion and bloodshed.

Osborne's head-quarters were at Commins's Commercial Hotel, which was situated at the upper end of the Quay, a fine old-fashioned house built in the last century. After one attempt all public speaking in the open air was found to be impossible as far as the Osborne party was concerned. The mob, who shouted for Smyth from the outset, would hear only Mr. Crean and the Nationalist candidate. A large store or stable (it had been used for both purposes) behind the hotel, in which O'Connell had once addressed a large gathering, was capable of affording standing-room for several hundreds of people, and was turned into a sort of meeting-place for Osborne's supporters, and anyone who chose could come and listen quietly to the speeches which were delivered there daily in his favour. At these meetings Osborne spoke frequently and displayed a great deal of his old caustic wit and humour, though the state of siege in which affairs had to be conducted was not congenial to his ideas of independent action. But the Nationalist party had complete command of the street, and it was only at the risk of his life that the Liberal candidate went out of doors without protection, which he frequently did, notwithstanding the remonstrance of his friends. On one occasion he refused an escort of police when surrounded by an angry gang of roughs armed with thick bludgeons, and walked from the Court House to his hotel, nearly an English mile, along the Quay, with a body-guard of not more than four friends, smiling

contemptuously at the savage yells which saluted him from all sides.

Mr. Smyth meanwhile was master of the situation as far as personal popularity and the cheers of the mob were concerned. He canvassed the electors at the head of a roaring crowd, generally with his hat in his hand, and made inflammatory speeches to his adherents with such assiduous enthusiasm that every day the masses grew more defiant and lawless. Mr. Crean heaped fuel on the flames by denouncing Osborne as a rack-renting landlord, and worst of all as a man who had given information to the Castle as to the alleged evil deeds of that well-known Tipperary patriot, Denis Dowling Mulcahy.

Handicapped by such terrific calumnies and accusations, and with his supporters threatened with violence on all sides, it is no wonder that Osborne one day, in the heat and bitterness of the moment, indulged in some severe jests at the expense of his opponent. An allusion was made to Mr. Smyth's exploit in Tasmania. 'Beyond all question he has recently become a Tasmaniac,' he remarked in his quick way. In his speeches to his supporters he frequently said very good things. He was speaking of the bribery which had been employed by Sir Henry Barron, and he warned his hearers against the vein of corruption that was poisoning the fair fame of the constituency. 'Remember, gentlemen,' he said, 'remember the fate of Sligo and of Cashel—Cashel with so many historic associations, Cashel now disfranchised, disgraced by the gold that purchased her constituency—Cashel once known as "Cashel of the kings," but henceforth to be remembered as "Cashel of the sovereigns."'

On another occasion, when he was speaking, he was interrupted by one of the audience, who jumped up and exclaimed in great trepidation, on hearing a sharp noise outside : ' That's a pistol.' There was a good deal of excitement, and a panic seemed inevitable, when Osborne called out to the alarmist, ' Now, my good friend, if you would only have the goodness to go off like that pistol I should be for ever indebted to you.' This sally raised a general laugh and restored the confidence of the meeting.

Taunted in public one day by a hostile editor with having never subscribed to a local charity, he retorted at once—that there was one Waterford charity to which he never had and never would subscribe, and that was the *Waterford Weekly* —, which happened to be his assailant's paper.

When the day of nomination came, affairs grew worse and worse. No sooner were the doors of the Court House opened than every nook and corner was occupied by a ferocious mob. As good a description of the scene as could be given in prose was published in verse some little time after in the *Waterford Chronicle*.¹ The lines ran thus in hexameters :—

THE NOMINATION.

This is the hall of the Court House. The loud-voiced murmuring people

Sit in the galleries, and shout, and raise a continual uproar.

On the front benches are seen the candidates and their supporters—

Osborne and P. J. Smyth, and Grubb the ' friend of the people.' Wyse, the High Sheriff, and Crean, and Barron the lately ejected,

Redmond, and Clampett, and Slattery, and Hennessy, clerk of the Poor House.

¹ *Waterford Chronicle*, April 19, 1870.

First rose the Sheriff, and read Her Majesty's writ of election
Calling the citizens forth to choose an appropriate member ;
And, as he finished the paper, he spoke a significant warning,
Bidding the folks to behave and not forget their good
manners.

Then rose Slattery, and spoke, and told of the virtues of
Osborne.

Few were his words, and weighty, but oft interrupted by
clamour.

Then stood forth Egan, and told what Smyth had endured
for his country—

How he had laboured with Meagher, and Martin, and valiant
O'Brien ;

How he had Ireland at heart, and would live and die for the
shamrock.

Then rose Barron, and told how cruelly he had been treated ;
How his familiar attorney had uttered a falsehood against
him,

But the great multitude laughed : nought cared they for him
or his sorrows.

Followed him Redmond, and Shea, and Clampett through
much interruption.

But when Osborne arose, such hooting and cheering and
hissing

Never before had been heard in the hall of the Waterford
Court House.

Not mine to tell of his speech, for his words were absorbed in
the tumult.

Then followed Smyth, and harangued and adjured them to
turn out the stranger.

'Let him go back,' shouted he, 'to the land that enslaves
and torments us.'

So the day passed on with loud and dissonant clangour,
Chaff and nicknames, and yells, and questionings hard to be
answered ;

While from the outer grounds the deep-voiced neighbouring
people,

Spoke, and in accents cantankerous answered the roar of the
Court House.

There was one incident in the nomination which has now some political interest and is worth relating. The Court House had been from the commencement in absolute possession of the mob, and the proceedings were merely a dumb-show. Seated straddle-wise on the dock was a young man, spare and small, and apparently not more than twenty years of age. The tumult and uproar was overwhelming, far surpassing the day, a few months past, when Osborne stood up, the popular candidate, to address the people. Now even Mr. Smyth had to shout lustily to be heard, whilst no one else could by any possibility gain a hearing. Amidst all the confusion it became apparent by degrees that this young man from his coign of vantage was being moved by a strong inspiration to make a speech. Waving his hat vigorously he shouted, 'Hear *me*, boys! let *me* speak!' There were shouts for order and cries of 'Well done, Tommy,' and it was evident that the youthful orator was well known to the rioters. By degrees he gained his point and there was a lull. He spoke for some twenty minutes and was listened to with eagerness and applause.¹ It was the first public effort of Thomas Sexton, now M.P. for Sligo, who was then the leading orator of a literary and debating society which had been founded a few years previously by Osborne's supporter, Dr. Scott.

If the nomination day was memorable for its scenes of wild excitement, it was entirely eclipsed by the polling day. The winter's sun rose upon a scene which was seldom matched, even in Waterford, where the political atmosphere has never been distinguished for its serenity. Policemen guarded the polling booths,

¹ His speech commenced with these words: 'Although I have not the privilege of addressing the electors from the serene and perfumed air of the Bench, but from the lowly tribune of the dock,' &c., &c.

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If the nomination day was memorable for its scenes of wild excitement, it was eclipsed by the polling day. The winter sun shone upon a scene which was seldom matched in Waterford, where the social atmosphere had been distinguished by the presence of the polling booths. Although I have never seen the Church, its serene and glass had been

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If the nomination day was memorable for its scenes of wild excitement, it was entirely eclipsed by the polling day. The winter's sun rose upon a scene which was seldom matched, even in Waterford, where the political atmosphere has never been distinguished for its serenity. Policemen guarded the polling booths,

¹ His speech commenced with these words: 'Although I have not the privilege of addressing the electors from the serene and perfumed air of the Bench, but from the lowly tribune of the dock,' &c., &c.

cavalry patrolled the town, infantry and artillery were all ready ; but all might have been five hundred miles away, for the protection they could afford the small minority of respectable folk who had the temerity to come out of doors was almost nil. From every lane and street there issued forth a motley multitude of men and women and Ballybricken 'boys,' ragged and disreputable, armed with sticks and stones and pouring out threats against all who opposed them. The poll opened at eight o'clock and the watchword on both sides was 'Vote early,' as there was an impression that many waverers would go with the winning man, and that whoever had the majority at twelve o'clock would gain the day. In consequence the town was early astir. Osborne took the lead and held it well throughout the day. At eleven o'clock he was 146 ahead, and placards to that effect were hung up in the office of the *Waterford Citizen*. Both windows and boards were quickly smashed to atoms. Bodies of men and boys paraded the streets, shouting 'Down with Osborne,' and singing Fenian songs during the entire day. A numerous body of respectable men had been organized to bring up voters on Osborne's behalf, but before one o'clock most of them had disappeared in terror. Many electors pledged to vote for Osborne absolutely refused to leave their houses, whilst those who did vote were guarded to the booths by escorts of cavalry. Men, indeed, voted at the peril of their lives who did not vote for Smyth.

But notwithstanding every effort Osborne kept the lead he had gained in the morning, and at last, finding victory certain, the mob in revenge commenced operations in earnest. When it was known that Osborne had actually won by eight votes a fierce tide of bloodthirsty

ruffians swept through the streets. The short February day was soon spent, and night gave immediate opportunities for violence. Even before three o'clock most of the shops had been shut and heaps of broken glass were lying on the Quay, which formed a sort of head-quarters of the mob. A peace-at-any-price Mayor and an incapable High Sheriff prevented any vigorous measures being taken to keep the peace. Many respectable voters, supporters of Osborne, fled the town by railway, fearing that they would not have sufficient protection from the authorities. Amongst them was Mr. J. A. Blake, who was set upon at the Mall by an immense crowd and barely escaped under an escort of dragoons. Hundreds of people were severely injured, and there was scarcely a house where a friend or supporter of Osborne's, or even a neutral or doubtful elector, lived, which did not bear marks of popular vengeance. Early in the evening the mob were in possession of the city, and, encouraged by excitement and drink to carry out the work of destruction, proceeded to wreck systematically all before them. Every window was riddled with stones. Shutters were pulled down, shops opened and rifled, and the *débris* strewed in the streets. Attempts were made to fire several houses, while a band of drunken scoundrels actually entered one house, broke all the windows, smashed a pier glass, and dragged into the street a large grand piano, upon which they danced with demoniac glee, amid the screams of an affrighted family of children. By way of showing there was no particular religious animosity in the proceedings, a section of the wreckers visited the Dominican Convent and St. Olave's Protestant Church, and did not leave until every pane of glass had been destroyed.

At last, rendered daring by success and impunity, sinister suggestions were thrown out as to the propriety of lynching the successful candidate, and the furious mob converged upon Commins's Hotel, where Osborne and his committee had taken refuge. The Quay was now a mass of infuriated savages. Pitchforks were being sharpened in a neighbouring forge, and a band of viragoes turned their attention to filling one of the hotel omnibuses with stones, preparatory to a long siege. This omnibus was also used as a battering-ram, and strenuous efforts were made with it to burst in the front door. Two more omnibuses, and a covered car, were next smashed up and rolled into the river, where next morning the shafts were to be seen appearing above the tide like wrecks.

Fortunately the Osborne party inside had received timely warning of the approaching storm, and had barricaded the ground floor, and armed themselves for the fray. Above one window was a clock, the outer face of which looked into the street, the inner showed its dial to the interior bar. By means of a hand-barrow an armed rioter from the street succeeded in removing the clock from its place, and from the elevation fired through the vacancy into the bar four shots, one of which grazed the cheek of a commercial traveller. One of the party inside returned the fire and the man fell back into the street blaspheming.

Nor were there wanting those quaint and humorous episodes which invariably accompany even the most tragic Irish events. There was a large party in the hotel, for Osborne had prepared an entertainment for some sixteen guests, including Major O'Gorman, who subsequently represented the city. One of the

besiegers in the course of the siege was forcibly shoved through the bar window, but the unfortunate victim was instantly made a prisoner of war, bound hand and foot, carried into the kitchen and thrown under the table, where he was guarded by a comical 'boots,' who marched up and down the floor with a broom on his shoulder denouncing the captive in unmeasured language. At last it was thought prudent to clear the lower part of the house. When the party came upstairs three quiet English commercial travellers who by some stroke of ill luck had arrived in Waterford that very day, were discovered in a state of abject terror, persuaded that their last hour had come, and they were to be offered up as victims to an offended and vengeful Irish nationality. One was seated on the stairs drinking a glass of hot brandy and water, which the sympathising housemaid had procured for him to cure a fainting fit. The remaining two were anxiously examining the building for a means of exit. They finally discovered a large box containing house-linen, and seizing sheets and quilts they knotted them together, and letting themselves down from a back window escaped through a neighbouring garden.

By degrees the fierce threats of the mob outside, that they would infallibly lynch Bernal Osborne when they got in, so alarmed his friends that with some difficulty they succeeded in persuading him to escape out of the house. Getting through a second-floor window, over the roof of the return to the skylight of an adjoining draper's shop, and having there effected a burglarious entry, he, in company with one friend, found safe shelter for the night, not uncomfortably bestowed away in a bundle of blankets. As it turned out, this precaution was unnecessary. Finding the hotel too

well defended, the mob dispersed, and continued elsewhere their frantic career of destruction. Although there were in the city five hundred police, three hundred dragoons, and a regiment of infantry with half a battery of artillery, no active measures were taken to disperse the rioters, and to the inefficiency of the local magistrates must be laid the principal blame of the memorable Wrecking of Waterford.

Next morning there was 'peace in Warsaw.' Wrecked houses, dilapidated shops, streets filled with broken glass, the embers of incendiary fires, all told their tale of ruin and revolution. Quiet citizens might have been seen emptying baskets full of stones back into the streets from which they were hurled. Osborne himself had to take measures to leave the town unobserved, and by the kind exertions of Mrs. Commins, who had almost despaired of ever seeing him escape with his life, the conquering hero of yesterday's poll was smuggled in a covered car out of a back door, through an unfrequented lane, to the railway station, from whence he arrived safely at Newtown Anner. It is hardly surprising that he should have written to his friend Mr. Ridgway a few days after: 'I am slowly recovering from the success of an Irish election.'

Such was Osborne's second experience of an Irish election. It made a powerful and practical impression upon his mind as to the necessity of voting by ballot, and of the abolition of the public functions of nomination day, and an official declaration of the poll.

His first speech when he reappeared in Parliament was upon the Ballot Bill, and his description of the scenes he had been through were listened to with

amused attention by the House.¹ In private he was fond of relating in his graphic style the thousand adventures of this memorable election. All previous experiences fell into the shade when compared to those on the Quay at Waterford. The scanty details given

¹ 'In Ireland you compel these men to have votes. You have what is called a self-acting registration, so they are compelled to have votes ; and most of them look upon a vote as one of the greatest curses. You have no right to compel these men to have votes unless you give protection ; without that the thing becomes something more serious than a farce. Go to an Irish town after an election, and it looks as if it had been besieged by an army, windows are broken, heads are broken, men you never hear of are maimed for life, and there are some whom you never hear of afterwards. The place is more like a battle-field than the scene of a constitutional election. Talk of logic and cowardice, I do not profess to be braver than other men—perhaps I am not so brave as the hon. member for South Northumberland—

“He jests at scars who never felt a wound.”

But this I can say, it does require considerable nerve to address your constituency out of a window after sunset. I can tell you this, if you wish to supersede the revolver you must have the ballot-box. You have a state of things now, especially in Ireland, such as existed only in the Middle Ages. Your freedom of election is a farce. There is no freedom ; every man who can buy arms goes to the poll armed. A mob stands by, it is heated afresh by every vote that is given, as if each vote fed a flame, and each man knows that he votes at the risk of his life. I have seen houses broken into, men who were pledged to vote one way taken out of their beds and obliged to vote the other way ; and after the election, when all was known, the houses had been externally demolished as the inmates would have been if the houses could not have been entered. Yet I am told it is cowardice to object to open voting. I say, rather than vote under such circumstances, I would prefer not to vote at all. You are expecting all these Irish farmers in the counties, who live in thatched houses which it is easy to set a light to, to come forward like free and independent electors and go to the polling booth to vote, with a chance of returning on a shutter. If you wish to supersede vote by bullet, you must have vote by ballot. I have my doubts of the Government bringing in a bill. I hope, if there be a bill, it will not only deal with the ballot, but that it will do away with that servile necessity—the duty of canvassing. I hope, too, we shall do away with that exasperating formality called the nomination. I hope we shall do away with that incentive to riot—the declaration of the poll. This I am sure of, if you wish to preserve freedom of election in Ireland especially, and in many large towns in England, there ought to be no difficulty and no delay in the Government introducing a bill to deal with these questions.'

here are merely a sketch of what was in fact a stern reality of political warfare.

Throughout the election there were many ludicrous incidents. But the actual expense-account of the successful candidate was probably as genuine a piece of unintentional humour as ever was printed. It ran as follows :—

WATERFORD CITY ELECTION, 1870.

EXPENSE ACCOUNT OF R. OSBORNE, ESQ., M.P.

	£	s.	d.
Inspectors, Poll Clerks, Messengers, Poll			
Books, Stationery, Hire of Rooms, &c.	65	11	7
Mr. P. Ryan, for Printing	19	7	7
Waterford <i>Citizen</i> Account	90	0	0
" <i>Mirror</i> "	23	0	0
" <i>Standard</i> "	8	13	0
" <i>Chronicle</i> "	45	0	0
" <i>Wesleyan Young Men's Journal</i>			
Account	4	8	0
Sheriff's Account	19	0	0
Mr. Harvey, for Printing	1	11	5
Expenses of fitting up Store for Meeting of			
Electors to hear Addresses of Mr. Osborne	4	3	6
Paid men to protect gates from mob on the			
several nights of meeting	17	6	0
Paid further expenses for ditto	6	5	0
Paid mob women from time to time	1	0	0
Paid eighty men on nomination-day to pro-			
cure Mr. Osborne a hearing	28	0	0
Cash paid Carty	1	0	0
Paid Moloney, who broke his leg by fall			
from Mr. Osborne's committee room	3	0	0
	£337	6	0

THOMAS PURCELL,

Expense Agent,

April 21, 1870.

56, Quay, Waterford.

A capital pendant to this was published in a Waterford paper about the same time.¹ While Bernal Osborne was occupied in the election we have been describing, there had been going on in the County Tipperary an equally exciting contest between Nationalist and Liberal candidates, a contest which resulted in the election of the notorious Jeremiah O'Donovan (Rossa), then a convict in Millbank, who defeated a co-Nationalist, Charles Kickham, and Mr. Denis Caulfield Heron, Q.C.

One of the stalwart 'boys' of Tipperary sent in the following election-bill to one of Mr. Heron's election-agents, the authenticity of which was vouched for at the time :—

Jim F——r, Mob conductor and Botheen Boy, &c., &c., to Mr. Herring's (*sic*) election agent, for the following work and murder done on the day of the polling, February 26, 1870 :—

		£	s.	d.
Item, To	three shouts for Heron, at 2 <i>d.</i> per shout	0	0	6
" "	three hurrahs for same, at 3 <i>d.</i> each	0	0	9
" "	four schreeches at	0	1	0
" "	three bounces in the air at 4½ <i>d.</i> each	0	1	1½
" "	making noise for 2 hours	0	1	4
" "	hitting a voter for Kickham the rap of a dead cat, which I spent 5 hours killing the night before	0	2	0
" "	making a prod at and giving two strokes of a wattle to one of Kickham's supporters, for which I got a most awful battering from the Kickhamites	0	3	9
" "	gripping one of Kickham's party by the windpipe or throttle ; for which I got the slap of a rock over the left ear, leaving me since in the care of a doctor	0	6	7

¹ See *Waterford Mail*, March 21, 1870.

	£	s.	d.
Item, To striking a voter over the sconce with a mud bag, for which I received cruel treatment from the women . . .	0	1	6
„ „ On the declaration of the Poll, when Mr. Heron was not declared elected by 4 majority, I took a fit of hurooing, shouting, screechin, roarin, leapin, bouncin, smashing windows, dashing into whiskey shops, swallow- ing half gallons of porter, skelping glasses of whiskey, rowling peelers, smeggin sogers, until I found myself nearly dead in the lock-up the fol- lowing morning, and had to pay one shilling fine	0	10	12
	£1	10	7

If this Bill is not paid before St. Patrick's Day be
Herring's there ill be bad work about it, so look out for
squalls.

Yours to command,

JIM F——R.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OPINIONS ON POLITICAL QUESTIONS. 1870-1874.

OSBORNE'S return for Waterford, in 1870, brought him back to the House of Commons just as Mr. Gladstone's Administration had completed its first year of office. In fifteen months from his second Nottingham candidature he had fought three contested elections and two petitions, so that it seemed as if the longer he lived the more remarkable became the vicissitudes of his Parliamentary life.

The most important measure of the Session was the Irish Land Bill, and though deeply interested in the general question, Osborne did not make a set speech upon the second reading of the Bill, but he supported it by his vote. In committee, however, he spoke several times, and his views and words were correct and sagacious. He predicted with perfect truth, in the discussion upon the legalizing of the Ulster custom in certain places outside Ulster, that 'of course the next agitation would be one for extending the Ulster tenant-right custom to the South of Ireland.' Upon the important question of 'compensation for disturbance,' he was clear and distinct in his opinions. He was not surprised at the promulgation of the principle, for 'the way in which Parliament had been playing at shuttlecock with the matter had made the

demands of the peasantry become greater every year.' He declared that—

the marrow of the Bill was now looked on in Ireland to be, first, security of tenure, and next restriction of arbitrary eviction. There was no ambiguity in the Bill, and he defied anyone who voted for the second reading to say that he did not feel in his conscience that he was voting for the new principle of giving the tenant a right to a certain occupancy. . . . Freedom of contract was a myth in Ireland. The small holder had no freedom. The poor tenant was ready to offer everything and they must protect that man. It might be contrary to the principles of political economy or other economies ; but such was the state of Ireland that they must legislate for the protection of the small tenant. Ireland was a country for small, not large, tenancies, and he never wished to see the consolidation of farms.

Two years before, when Mr. Gladstone's celebrated resolutions upon the Irish Church were attracting the attention of the public, and paving the way for his restoration to power and office, Bernal Osborne had written down some 'Notes on Ireland,' which were evidently intended as the commencement of an essay upon the Irish Question. But writing was always irksome to him. His brain travelled too quickly for his pen, and the effort seems to have been discontinued after a few pages of manuscript had been written. Taken in connexion with his opinions upon the Land Act of 1870, even these few notes are interesting.

NOTES ON IRELAND.

Ireland, so far from running any danger through neglect appears to run some risk of being over-dosed by the number of its physicians and variety of their remedies. The member for Cork, in despair of human legislation, has invoked the assistance of a political Prospero worthy of the occasion ; and the Chief Secretary, in a speech bristling with statistics, has

endeavoured to prove that Ireland is prosperous, and if not, will become so when the policy he has propounded becomes the law of the land. At the outset the Secretary takes credit that the executive in Ireland is essentially Irish. If measures be not popular, at least they are carried out by ministers and officials who are 'racy of the soil.' The same apology might have been made by another distinguished Celt, the McMurrough, who certainly had no Anglo-Saxon blood in his veins, when he called in Norman intervention to support his own views of Irish government, with as little satisfaction to the native population. Granted the high-bred urbanity of the Viceroy, the matured wisdom of the Chancellor, and the administrative capacity of the Chief Secretary, who combines the genial courtesy of the Irish with the moderate impartiality of the English gentleman, and who has vindicated the law against Fenians and Orangemen under trying and difficult circumstances, are respected by all in Ireland. It is not the men who are objected to, but the system of governing Ireland, which is an anomaly in 1868. The plan of government by a Viceroy is out of date, demoralising in its objects, and tends to bring royalty into contempt. As matters stand, whichever party is in power, the partisans of either regard the Castle in Dublin as a political Club of which the Viceroy is the temporary manager, with no real power, unable to originate, an Irish Mikado; the Tycoon, in the shape of the Home Secretary, pulling the strings from Downing Street—the weakest executive in the world. As Commissions are the fashion, appoint one to examine into the uses and efficiency of the Viceroyal office! If the question of Irish prosperity is to be settled by statistics there is no lack of them; no dispute as to the universal value of all stock except sheep. The hereditary thirst for whisky still continues in spite of increased duties.

But can there be a stronger proof of the power of what are termed 'sentimental grievances,' that alongside of material improvement there exists increasing discontent? and this without the existence of leaders of mark. Consider what would be the state of things were there leaders and England embroiled in war.

The feeling of the farmers is diverse. Nationality is strong within their hearts, which, through our wretched policy of the past, is symbolled in their Church. The 'strong' farmer is not the simple race supposed. Able to bargain, not disposed to countenance Fenian projects, he is well aware his labourer would be put in his place were a revolution to take place; still he is not content with the mode of government. Shopmen in towns, and labourers, form the dangerous class which furnish the active Fenians. Provincial towns are decaying; a revolution has been caused by railways; trade is dull; apprentices, better educated, but without a career, are discontented; youths measure tape in possession of a green and gold uniform. The labourer's increase of wages is not real, owing to the rise in provisions. He was better off with one acre. In old age or sickness there is nothing now but the prospect of the Poor House, which he detests. The Poor Law is unsuited to the habits and feelings of the people, unpopular with pauper and ratepayer, while the cost of the establishments is very great.

The Government plan of dealing with the Land Question is a promise of a bill. A 'solemn inquiry' is most uncalled for and mischievous. There is evidence enough—see Parliamentary Committee 1866. The appointment of another committee will raise illusory hopes, and unsettle any good to be derived from the Bill. A 'solemn inquiry,' a great blunder, holding out hopes of fixity of tenure never intended to be realised, and is, in fact, a policy of irritation.

Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis. Government by commission is an abdication of responsibility. Neither heroic remedies nor philosophic prescriptions are wanted, but compensation for improvements, and leases for building. With some surprise I heard an able financier, thankful for small favours at the hands of Her Majesty's Ministers, affirm the one thing necessary after Land Tenure was a charter and endowment for a Roman Catholic University.

As regards the question of middle-class education Ireland appears to me under-schooled and over-colleged. A noble lord, adopting the last-coined phrase, says the Church is a 'sentimental grievance' in Ireland; but sentimental grievances are not the less dangerous if founded on real grounds

of injustice ; and wherever you turn in Ireland this grievance, though taking various forms, is at the bottom of much heart-burning, if not disaffection. It lies at the root of the uneasy feeling between landlord and tenant.

Look at Tipperary, where Cromwell left his mark by wholesale eviction of original proprietors. Turn to Prendergast's 'Cromwellian Settlement.' In process of time the trumpeters and troopers who held grants have become landed aristocracy ; the descendants of men who derided Episcopacy and deposed monarchy are now Conservatives and 'good Protestants' of the established religion ; Protestant in Tipperary implying not so much an implicit reverence for the Thirty-nine Articles as an abhorrence of the Church of Rome. Their tenantry belong to that Church, but every man without a lease is at the mercy of his landlord, should he dare to vote for a candidate who is of his own political bias and religious sect. The tenant rated at 12*l.* is placed on the registry of voters. This privilege is his bane. If he votes as he would wish he is sure to affront his landlord ; and if he supports his landlord he is damned by his priest. Voters request to be way-laid in order to escape voting. The Church is kept up by the enforced vote of those who are opposed to it. The ascendancy of a Protestant minority is thus maintained through the machinery of a Catholic majority. Indifferent to a Reform Bill ! no wonder. The vote is a positive detriment. Interest and conviction draw the farmer different ways, if leases be not given. The ballot is required. The system of requiring a Catholic tenantry to support by their votes a Protestant Establishment is preposterous. Disestablishment does not imply disendowment. The mere money is the smallest part of this question. It is the spirit of ascendancy which is promoted by the legal position of the State Church. Remove Irish Bishops from the House of Lords, and most of the Church property might be left without complaint. The position is no longer tenable. Lord Russell's plan is the same as Burke's in 1765, but is not feasible in 1868. There should be a compromise adopting the congregational system in place of the territorial.

Lord Mayo's plan reminds me of 'letting I dare not wait upon I would.' As for 'levelling up,' or payment to

priests and Presbyterians, from what sources is the payment to come? That refuge for the destitute politician, the Consolidated Fund.

The Fenians lay no stress on these reforms. They have a direct interest in their not being granted. Their object is to keep alive discontent in Ireland.

It may be as well to supplement these opinions with two extracts from Bernal Osborne's public utterances on the same subject :—

A great man in India, distinguished for his career **there**, Sir Thomas Munroe, said : ' We can never be qualified to govern a people against whose institutions and religion we are prejudiced. Remember that in talking of Ireland. We are not qualified to govern any race of men whose institutions we not only do not cherish, but whose religion we do not respect, although we may not agree with the doctrines of that religion.' What has been the case in Ireland? Well, gentlemen, believe me, in speaking of Ireland, and knowing it well, I am not so foolish as to suppose, nor so wicked as to say to you, that the granting redress for the real or supposed grievances, be they one or more, will at once have the effect of quieting public opinion in Ireland. I do not say so. Unfortunately, legislation has been too tardy, grievances have been too long established for the feelings of the people of that country to be kindly inclined towards the English Government ; but this I do say, that whatever may be the course, it is the part of England to put Ireland in a right position, and to do justice to her people. Now, against their doing justice to Ireland there is only one class there that have any interest in keeping up the present system of government, and you will be surprised when I tell who that class is. They are what are called the Fenian element. And why? They don't care what grievances you redress. They don't look for Reform, but for Revolution, and as long as you continue your system of government in the land in not paying proper respect to the national feeling, so long will that Fenian element, although it may not have many respectable co-operators, to a certain extent find sympathizers. Therefore these Fenians who come from America are interested in your doing nothing, because they want, not

reform, but revolution ; they want to depose the Queen from the throne, and establish a government of their own, in which every one of them shall have his hand in the till. Seeing this, what would you do? What is justice to Ireland? Justice to Ireland is governing her according to her national sentiments, and even, if you can, being blind to her prejudices.

Now the system of governing Ireland by a Viceroy, in the person of a nobleman who is saluted as a Governor in Dublin, and then in a few hours is at Holyhead, cheek by jowl with other men, is an obsolete, obstructive, and complete mistake. If you wish the Irish to be a loyal nation, and they are, it is positively necessary to do away with that mode of governing Ireland, and the monarch must go to Ireland the same as she goes to Scotland. The Irish are a poetic and sentimental people, and you can never cherish the one or other without the presence of the monarch before their eyes.

At present the monarchy is embodied in the not very agreeable form of the judge when he goes to assize and puts the black cap on his head. It is imperatively necessary that you should begin at the beginning, look to the whole way of governing Ireland, if you wish her to be peaceful, and, as she ought to be, the right arm of the British people.—Nottingham, November 12, 1867.

I am not one who says that you are willingly unjust to Ireland. I believe that you are well inclined to do justice to Ireland. But I say that you are for the most part grossly ignorant, and some of you bigoted, in your legislation with respect to Ireland. If there were an Irish legislature in College Green, its first act would be to undo one half of your legislation. I was sorry to hear the hon. member (Mr. Maguire) calling out for identity of institutions, for one of the most mischievous proceedings has been the forcing on Ireland that identity of institutions (Mr. Maguire : 'Identity of interests'). Still, there are people who say, 'Give to Ireland the same institutions as exist in England.' It is in vain to think of giving ease to a country where no identity of feeling, of circumstances, and above all of religion, exists, by calling for identity of institutions. It would be a vain chimera as a remedy for the evils of Ireland.—House of Commons, May 23, 1867.

At the close of the Session the country was thrown

into a fever of excitement over the declaration of war between France and Germany. An extraordinary sensation had also been occasioned by the publication in the *Times* of a *projet de traité*, dated a considerable period before the war between the belligerent powers, in which proposals had been made for the occupation of Belgium by France, with corresponding advantages guaranteed to Prussia.

Mr. Disraeli raised the whole question of the recent foreign diplomacy of the Government, and Bernal Osborne took a leading part in the debate. He attacked the Government for their official reserve, which he declared would be misunderstood on the Continent for weakness, if not for pusillanimity. Commenting on the action of France and Prussia, 'I do not stop to ask,' he said, 'which was the Faust and which the Mephistopheles of the diplomatic drama. It is sufficient for me to know that Belgium was to be the victim.' He advocated an armed neutrality, believing that Belgium was really an outwork of the liberties and independence of England, and should be protected at all hazards. The *Times* took the same view, and said that 'Mr. Bernal Osborne's vigorous speech, discarding altogether the supposed guarantee of the Saxon provinces, recalled the House to the essence of the question.' This was really Osborne's greatest forte in debate. His remarks always went straight to the point, and the assistance he thereby rendered to a deliberative assembly was invaluable.

Throughout the next three years Osborne, on this question and upon many others, was by no means in harmony with the Government. As in every other Parliament in which he sat, it seemed his fate to be opposed in a great measure to his own party. He

would never consent to sacrifice his independence of thought and action, much less keep silence upon questions in which he was really interested. Throughout the next year he took part in many debates, especially upon the Army Regulation Bill, and, as he described himself once, 'not being immediately connected with either of the two great parties,' he was enabled to speak freely, and with the impartiality of a 'candid friend,' upon every subject. In this rôle he invariably gained the ear of the House, and was listened to with keen relish whenever he took part in the discussions of the day.

During the discussion on the Alabama Treaty, the Member for Waterford spoke frequently, and he was unceasing in his criticisms upon the policy of the Government in this matter. He burst out one evening with these words :—

If we had sent a shrewd practising attorney to Geneva, what money he might have saved us ! If we could have persuaded a keen man of business like the hon. and learned member for East Sussex to go out on our behalf he would have drawn you a treaty for 10%, about which there would have been no ambiguity whatever !

Mr. Gladstone retorted with a clever characterization of Osborne's method of oratory.

It has been suggested (he said) that we should have sent over a shrewd attorney to arrange these matters for us. This remark is one of the light javelins from the armoury of my hon. friend's sarcastic rhetoric which are always acceptable to this House, and which are not unacceptable even to those who feel on receiving the stroke a sensation somewhat resembling that produced upon the skin by the prick of a pin.

Next year Osborne had his revenge over the Irish University Bill, which proved fatal to the Ministry.

Fastening on a real or fancied inaccuracy of the Prime Minister's in an historical reference, he attributed it to the notorious exclusion of a Professor of Modern History from the scheme of a new University, and taunted the Government again and again on their neglect of history. But these passing recriminations of debate lose by repetition all the force and flavour they possessed when thrown off in the heat of discussion or conversation. It was generally the personal elements which made them racy, or some reference to events then fresh in everyone's mind, but now forgotten.

Although impatient of the manual labour of writing, or of any sustained literary effort, Osborne was fond, as the humour or idea seized him, of setting down on a single sheet of note-paper his opinions on men and things. All these he carefully preserved. The following sketch gives an insight into his political views during this period. It is headed 'August, 1872,' and runs thus :—

Present position of public affairs not encouraging. We have a Government unable to carry its measures, which sends messages to promote new agitations from its sick chamber to the House of Commons ; and a Treasury Department which acts on the Scriptural tenet of not letting its left hand know what its right hand doeth, whilst organising a Civil Service which refuses obedience to its chiefs. An army is reconstructed which proclaims its discontent through a successful motion in the House of Lords ! On the other hand, an Opposition rejoicing over the dissensions of the Liberals but having no policy of their own ! Labour aims at arresting the accumulation of the fund which provides employment—Capital ! Political sentiment has superseded political economy ! The Church torn by internal differences. The Non-conformist stands aloof while infidelity saps the foundation of education and religion. Independence of thought made a reason for excluding wise men from Parliament.

Although Osborne some three years before had

been driven away from Nottingham, it is pleasant to know that in 1871 his political friends and admirers in that town had by no means forgotten him. He was invited to be present at a meeting at his old political head-quarters, the Lion Hotel, to receive an address 'in appreciation of the services rendered by him during his representation of the borough in Parliament, and expressive of regard for the excellence of his character and the brilliancy of his attainments.' Amongst the signatures were those of our old friend Samuel Bunting and of William Nicholls. The latter is mentioned more particularly, as he not only had always been a great political supporter of Osborne, but had met him continually in quite another department of life. 'Billy' Nicholls was a successful Nottingham bookmaker, and, of course, a frequenter of race-meetings throughout the kingdom. He was one of those men endowed with a marked individuality of character, to whom in every walk of life Osborne seemed naturally attracted. Nicholls was ready with a repartee or a bit of chaff with anyone, were he a peer or a peasant, and bandied a jest with the same alacrity as he booked a bet. At Newmarket Osborne met him frequently, and so they became friends. A valuable political ally Nicholls proved afterwards in Nottingham, where he had risen to the distinction of being a Town Councillor, and no one worked harder to secure the member for Nottingham's second return. A year after his defeat Nicholls met Osborne at Newmarket, and accosted him : 'Look here,' he said, 'you must get back to Parliament ; you're one of the right sort, and if money's all you want, why, look here (taking a bundle of notes out of his pocket), I can let you have ten thousand pounds, and as much more of the brass as you want.'

During the debates upon the abolition of purchase Osborne spoke frequently. One audacious sally was greeted with shouts of laughter. Some member had, in mentioning some remarks made by Osborne, designated him as the 'honourable and *gallant* member.' Jumping up quickly he turned to the speaker, and in his menacing way shouted out loudly, 'Don't call me names ; I'm *not* gallant !' On another occasion he sadly scandalized some portions of the House by alluding to somebody's 'd——d good-natured friends.' There were loud cries of 'Order, order,' when Osborne, coolly addressing the Speaker, explained that he was only quoting from the *Critic*, and that he was not aware of any rule of the House which prevented him making a quotation from Sheridan's plays. Upon the subject of the House of Lords frescoes, he had, in common with Lord Elcho, always expressed strong expressions of condemnation. In 1871 he denounced the 'diabolical system of voting money for frescoes,' complaining bitterly that, in the famous picture of Waterloo, 'Blucher had become nearly obliterated, and the famous nose of the Duke of Wellington was dropping off his face.' It was with such small jokes that Osborne infused some of his own great animal spirits, of which indeed they were the outcome, into the House of Commons, and kept it alive with his continual chaff and conversation.

Once only he met his match in a bout of criticism. It was in 1871, when Lord Hartington was Chief-Secretary for Ireland, and Ribandism was rampant in some of the Irish midland counties. The Government moved for a Select Committee to inquire into the state of Westmeath, and Osborne, who abhorred the system of Select Committees, opposed the suggestion in one of his rattling and caustic speeches. The Irish Solicitor-

General of the day was Mr. Dowse,¹ who had but recently obtained a seat in the House, a man of high ability, and intellectual as well as legal attainments, and possessed, moreover, of a fund of humour and quick retort which is seldom found on the front Treasury Bench. Tried in that unequalled intellectual alembic, the library of the Dublin Four Courts, Mr. Dowse had gone through the fire of debate a thousand times, and had met and defeated the keenest wits of the Irish bar in the battle of words. Listening with genuine amusement at the tirade of Bernal Osborne he rose at once to follow him in the debate, and astonished and delighted the House by the good-humoured and yet trenchant way in which he crossed swords with the redoubtable Parliamentary wit, and, returning blow for blow, scored what was considered at the time an undoubted victory.

In March 1873 the resignation of Mr. Gladstone's Government warned the world that the administration of the day was not likely to last, and in July Osborne spoke in the House of a 'decaying Government and a worn-out Opposition.' But the dissolution was not to take place until the following January, not long after the member for Waterford had assisted at a ceremony in his own house at Newtown Anner, which was to prove to him a source of pleasure and happiness for the remainder of his life. This was the marriage of his second daughter, Grace, to the present Duke of St. Albans. In the following month his eldest daughter, Edith Bernal Osborne, was married to Henry Arthur Blake, grandson of Peter Blake, Esq.,

¹ Now third Baron of the Exchequer Division of the High Court of Justice in Ireland.

of Corbally Castle, county Mayo, formerly one of the Special Resident Magistrates of Ireland, and now Governor-General of the Bahamas Island.

Then came the news of the dissolution, and for the last time Bernal Osborne buckled on his electioneering harness.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THIRD WATERFORD ELECTION. CLOSE OF
POLITICAL CAREER.

ONCE again Osborne found himself in Commins's Hotel on the Quay of Waterford, seeking the recognition of a thirty-three years' advocacy of Ireland's due interests and liberties. The political situation, however, had changed considerably since last he risked his life in an Irish candidature. The Home Rule League had been started early in 1870, and the new party promised, with Mr. Butt as leader, to carry a large number of constituencies under an attractive National banner. Osborne's objections to the scheme were well put in his address. 'The question of "Home Rule,"' he said, 'is so complex in its terms and elastic in its interpretation, I am not able to pronounce an opinion on its ultimate end. Whilst I look with favour on any scheme which may make a better provision for local wants, I cannot support any plan which would tend to the disintegration of this great empire.'

But if Osborne was not prepared to accept a political cry in lieu of a definite policy, there were plenty of men in Ireland who were sufficiently satisfied with the idea of Home Rule to adopt Mr. Butt's programme and postpone a fuller consideration of its merits and results until they had gained a seat in the House of Commons.

Never was there such a rush for Parliamentary honours. A clear dozen of names were mentioned in Waterford as possible candidates besides Osborne. There was Mr. Delahunty, Mr. Crean, Mr. Henry Slattery, Mr. John L. Conn, Mr. Fisher, a local journalist, Mr. Grubb, Sir John Barrington, Mr. G. F. Bloomfield, Mr. Richard Power, Major O'Gorman, and Mr. Edward Gibson, Q.C. Of these, five went to the poll, Osborne's most formidable opponents being Mr. Richard Power, whose family had for many years represented the county in Parliament, and Major O'Gorman, one of Osborne's former supporters. These two gentlemen were both resident in the neighbourhood of Waterford, and had embraced the Home Rule creed with open arms. They held open-air meetings every night and appealed to the people to support them as independent politicians, asking and seeking no favour from any English Government. Popular feeling, aided by the gentle persuasion of the Ballybricken 'boys,' accordingly adopted the two Home Rulers as the heroes of the day, though Mr. Delahunty, another well-known local celebrity, was supposed by many to be the strongest candidate.

Osborne entered upon this final contest with no very sanguine anticipations of success, and it was fought out by him under peculiarly unfortunate and depressing circumstances. Only once was he able to speak at his old place of meeting behind Commins's Hotel, and even then he was not in a fit state of health to be on a platform. As he walked back to the clubhouse he said to Dr. Scott, with sudden cheerfulness :— 'It's all right, Scott, I shall get in !' 'What makes you think so ?' said his friend. 'Look there !' he said, pointing to the Titanic form of Major O'Gorman,

who was speaking from a balcony under which carpenters were placing props, 'Look there! the weight of their misrepresentations is so great that they have to put something underneath to prevent the balcony falling.' Next day he was confined to his bed by a severe attack of illness, which disabled him during the entire progress of the election. His last hopes were destroyed when Mr. Gibson came down from Dublin as a Conservative candidate. Tactical necessities involved an undivided Conservative vote, and thus all chance of a coalition between Whigs and Moderate Tories was lost, and the situation, as far as Osborne was concerned—never too promising—was rendered well-nigh hopeless. Unable to make any personal canvass, he was hearing from hour to hour, through gloomy days of suffering, of wavering friends awed by threats to which past experience lent new terrors, of a fast-failing cause, and finally of a defeat more signal even than he anticipated. But such news, trying as it was, always found him with a cheerful smile of resignation and a pleasant answer for every sympathetic friend.

There were, as usual, many humorous incidents connected with the election. Mr. Delahunty, who stood as a Liberal, had long been known for his belief that all the woes of Ireland arose from the circulation of one-pound notes. In this contest, however, Delahunty did not rely solely upon his knowledge of Irish finance. He produced an old letter, written to him by O'Connell in 1826, in which he was spoken of in high terms as a patriot. Power declared Delahunty to be an antiquated Whig, and challenged him to produce the letter he received from Devonshire House, saying that the Liberator would turn in his grave if

he ever thought his letter would be found in the same pocket with a letter from the head of the 'base, brutal, and bloody Whigs.'

One eccentric elector declared he would not vote for any of the candidates for the following reasons :—

Power was too young—(he was only 21).

Delahunty was too old—(he was 70).

O'Gorman was too big—(he was 21 stone).

Osborne was too sick—'likely soon to die, and therefore there would be the bother of a new election.'

Gibson was a barrister who would sell them for a seat on the Bench.

Though there was no absolute tumult or riot in Waterford during the election, the city was in a very excited state. Once a rumour was spread that Power was not of age, and therefore would be disqualified, and it was feared some serious disturbance would take place if the popular candidates were not returned. In this, as in former fights, Osborne had at his side a large portion of the education and respectability of the electorate. But he had, at the same time, numerous and bitter enemies, and during an election numbers outweigh intelligence. He had, moreover, made a joke in the House of Commons about his last election, which was remembered against him. It was during the debate on the ballot. 'I remember finding,' he said, 'a most extraordinary item in my last election-bill, namely, "for two sets of teeth, £12 10s." I was so alarmed that I asked whether it was legal, and I was told it was, for the men lost their teeth in my defence, and there were others walking about quite prepared to lose another set in the same way.' This playful way of alluding to the events of his last election was resented by such of the Ballybricken population as had been engaged on behalf

of Osborne, and, like the story of the goose in the pulpit, was not forgotten when the day of the poll came round.

The result was as follows :—

Richard Power	.	.	.	H. R.	536
Purcell O'Gorman	.	.	.	H. R.	483
J. Delahunty	.	.	.	L.	366
E. Gibson	.	.	.	C.	365
R. B. Osborne	.	.	.	L.	160

Out of the five candidates who contested Waterford in 1874, four ultimately obtained seats in Parliament. Mr. Delahunty was soon afterwards returned for the County of Waterford, and thereby gained the opportunity of delivering the famous lines in the House :—

The arrow that the heart of Ireland smote
Was feathered with a one-pound note.

Mr. Gibson next year was elected for the University of Dublin, and became subsequently Attorney-General for Ireland. Major O'Gorman's parliamentary fame was secure after he had made the famous declaration that 'a man had a right to drink as much as he could walk away with.' But he lost his seat in 1880 by turning his back on that principle and betraying the history of his political life by adopting, under pressure of a section of the Waterford electors, the *theory* of Sunday closing.

CHAPTER XXX.

FINAL APPEARANCE IN PUBLIC. DEATH.

OSBORNE made no further attempt to re-enter political life. Amongst the Irishmen who regretted his absence from the House of Commons was Mr. Pope Hennessy, who had been one of Osborne's parliamentary friends and admirers. His letter seems to have been kept as a pleasant reminder that Irish gratitude for past labours was not altogether a negative quantity.

Government House, Bahamas : March 2, 1874.

DEAR BERNAL OSBORNE,—My delight at Disraeli's success is diminished for the moment at seeing you out of the House.

But of course you will get a seat before very long.

It is not merely the absence of the greatest Parliamentary wit ; but I have always maintained that you had more of the statesman in you than can be found in half the pretenders in the front bench rolled together.

A good many people in England regard you with the same feelings ; so I have little doubt but I shall find you safe in Parliament again when I get back to London for a holiday.

With great respect and affection, always yours faithfully,

J. POPE HENNESSY.

R. Bernal Osborne, Esq.

Only twice again did the late Member for Waterford make an appearance in public, once in 1878 and once in 1880. The first speech he delivered at the annual banquet of the Nottingham Liberal Club, and

the vigorous onslaught which he made upon the divisions in the Liberal party created a sensation at the time. Those portions of his remarks which related to his own political career are interesting. He was proposing the toast of 'the Houses of Parliament.' Speaking of the Lower Chamber, he said :—

My recollection of the House of Commons is more distant and most painful. As regards that House, gentlemen, I feel in the situation of an Irish tenant who, after having expended considerable capital on his land, and reckoning that he had got a fixity of tenure, found himself summarily ejected without any compensation for unexhausted improvements. But, whatever may have been my situation in the past, at least I may say this—as an independent observer, a perfectly independent observer, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left—I think I may be able to form a dispassionate judgment upon the aspect of affairs. I can, without favour or affection, review the past, and criticize the present aspect of Parliament. Now, as regards the past, I can look with a pardonable pride to the efforts that I have, however humble, made in the public service. I entered life early in the Liberal ranks. I have always served, I may say I have carried a musket, in those ranks. I have participated by my vote and by my humble voice in all the great reforms of the age in which we live, and I have lived to see men who did not sow the seed reap the harvest, while I have taken the Liberal oar in the warmth and heat of the day. Now, please to recollect, going back a few years, the questions that have been agitated by the Liberals. I will give you a few—Free Trade, Household Suffrage, Reform of the Irish Church, Ballot. I say, from my conduct in these matters, and I claim to be called a Liberal, I am a Liberal of the Liberals. But what has been my fate? I know what the vicissitudes of politics are. I have had the honour of sitting for various places. I have been consistent, but the constituents have not been consistent! It has been my fate to be turned out of a great English constituency for my Irish predilections; to have crossed the water to an Irish constituency and to have been turned out of an Irish

constituency for my love of English connexion. Such has been my fate, and I find myself, as the Irish song says, 'on the bleak shore alone,' without a seat possible to me in either country. It is impossible for one with my sentiments and my knowledge of the government of this country to swallow the mock-turtle mess of Home Rule, made for home consumption, or to sympathise with the prosy patriotism of the Irish obstructionists. I cannot for a moment condescend to get a seat through the sonorous but secure sedition of some Irishman ; such will not be my idea of getting into Parliament. I can remember some lines written in the last century with regard to the Middlesex election which will now apply, I think, to an Irish qualification :—

Would you go to this House through the true gate,
Much quicker than even O'Donnell went ?
Let Parliament send you to Newgate,
And Newgate will send you to Parliament.

Such is not my idea. I love Ireland and the Irish as much as any man can love them. I have proved it by my vote, but I cannot stoop even for the honour of being in Parliament to suit my ideas and my knowledge of what is good for Ireland by abandoning the British connexion. Well, you may say a harbour of refuge may be open in this country, but harbours of refuge are expensive, and I am free to confess to you that I have now arrived at a stage of life that I don't care to expend my capital and subscribe largely to local charities, to erect a hospital, and to give a park to the people ; therefore, Sir, I am content to take the character of an independent observer.

The last time Bernal Osborne was ever seen upon a political platform was during the general election of 1880, when he came down to a public meeting at Aylesbury, where his friend, Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild, was standing as a Liberal candidate. On that occasion he displayed all his ancient energy and vivacity. His speech, delivered to an excited and

tumultuous audience, was as usual full of hard hits, passing jests, and sporting allusions, and he gained a hearing even amongst a palpably unsympathetic audience.

But though his active political career had practically ended in 1874, Osborne never ceased to interest himself in public affairs. He still lived very much as of old, lodging in Pall Mall, reading the papers with avidity in the morning, playing whist at the Reform Club in the afternoon, and dining out in the evening. Indeed, he used to say with rueful good humour that if politics had given him up, society had not, and during the last few years of his life no one was more courted than the great Parliamentary wit. Macaulay once hinted that to be a leader of fashion it was sufficient to be dull and supercilious. If the historian's own career was not a sufficient refutation of the sneer, Osborne's example proves the saying to have been more epigrammatic than accurate. Society pressed the displaced politician into its service and he was the most sought-for guest at the best dinner-tables in London.

Osborne carried a great deal of his old Parliamentary habit of independence into society. In politics he had distinguished himself by selecting for attack the very men whom courtiers and self-seekers would have flattered. In the same way in society he recommended himself by free and open speech, and not by servile compliance.

When Lord Carlisle was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, Osborne, as an old comrade of the Normanby days, was one of his most favoured guests at the Vice-regal Lodge. Lord Carlisle was a devoted admirer of music, and one of his chief amusements was to

entertain all the best amateur talent of Dublin. One evening an amusing incident took place. A lady, whose rendering of some of Moore's melodies gave great satisfaction to the Viceroy, was singing one of his particular favourites, 'One dear smile,' whilst his Excellency sat listening attentively at the piano beside her. Suddenly there was heard a terrible fit of sneezing. Everyone looked up, and the culprit was discovered to be no less a personage than Archbishop Whately. The famous prelate had always been notorious for his unceremonious manners, and on the present occasion he gave a further illustration of them. Again and again was the sneezing repeated, and as the Archbishop was in close proximity to the piano, and assisted his sneezing efforts with a large red silk handkerchief, the situation became first painful and then ridiculous. Finally the fair songstress was obliged to cease singing, and 'One dear smile' was transformed into a very broad and irrepressible laugh. Bernal Osborne's musical sensitiveness was outraged to such an extent that he remarked in his most caustic manner, 'I trust your Grace's next sermon will not be cut short by a sternutatory obligato of the same description, or you will certainly blow the whole of your congregation out of church.'

Bernal Osborne up to the last year of his life retained the vigour, habits, and appearance of manhood. In 1880 Mrs. Osborne died suddenly at Newtown Anner, and the news seems to have given him an unusual shock. He did not survive his wife very long. During the remainder of his life he began to lose some of the buoyancy which formerly had been so marked a characteristic of his constitution. But to the last he struggled bravely and bore acute physical pain with great fortitude. Recommended by Dr. Nunn, his

medical adviser, to try a change of air and scenery, Osborne left London on December 24, 1881, to spend Christmas with his daughter at Bestwood Lodge. A heavy fog prevailed during the journey and it affected him seriously, as he fainted twice during the drive from Nottingham Station to Bestwood. He rallied a little for a few days, but alarming symptoms having presented themselves, Dr. Nunn was summoned, and expressed sadly his opinion that the worst might any day be expected. There were slight temporary improvements, but they were followed by speedy relapses, and on Wednesday afternoon, January 4, 1882, Ralph Bernal Osborne passed quietly away.

The regret which Osborne's exclusion from public life in 1874 occasioned had always been mitigated by a hope, indulged in by politicians of all parties, that the time would yet come when he might resume his place in the Legislature. When that hope was extinguished by his death the old regret was more poignantly felt. The expressions of sorrow for his personal loss were mingled with respect and admiration for his public talents and political services. From political friends and foes of all parties and all classes, the same feeling, that we could have better spared a better man, was universal. The Press demonstrated by a universal tribute to his memory how large a space he had filled in the ranks of public men. Whatever his faults and defects, writers of all shades of opinion accorded him an honoured and honourable place in the Parliamentary annals of the century, and his death, at an age which has found several of the great statesmen of the time in full possession of their powers and influence, was deeply regretted by men of every political school.

CHAPTER XXXI.

EPIGRAMS, POLITICAL PRINCIPLES, ETC.

HABITS of mind react naturally upon men's habits of work. Osborne possessed a restless, energetic, but somewhat undisciplined mind, and, as we have already had occasion to remark, disliked continuous sedentary work, and especially writing. His correspondence was never large, and it was always fitful. In the same way his work was done spasmodically. His powers of reading were enormous, and he was particularly well-informed in history. With a remarkably tenacious memory, he was enabled to ransack his brain for facts, or turn up a quotation from an author with equal facility ; and the day before he made a speech in the House he might always be seen in the Reform Club library verifying his points or examining Hansard. For many years he kept commonplace books, which he filled with aphorisms of the best philosophers and historians, and his mind was stored with the principles of Burke, for whose writings he had a great admiration. As he advanced in years, and the daily Press became more voluminous and powerful, he devoted a great part of his mornings to devouring every conceivable kind of newspaper, and when any remarkable article or passage struck his attention, or corroborated his own political views, he would cut it out and keep it. In this way he collected a vast amount of newspaper

literature. Indeed, he made the Press one of his chief studies, and watched for the fluctuations of public opinion with intense interest.

When any bright thought passed through his mind, or when any quotation pleased him, he made a note of it, and sometimes added a comment. Some of them may be quoted as interesting examples of literary instinct.

EPIGRAMS AND CHARACTERIZATIONS.

Two things alike disagreeable. Quarrelling and ...aking up.

A fastidiousness which borders on misanthropy.

Man proposes. Woman poses.

A gourmet. One who prefers the woodcock's trail to the nightingale's song.

Some persons are irreproachable, because unapproachable.

A person who talks above his capacity and your comprehension.

Mediæval ignorance combined with modern impertinence.

A mixture of youthful caprice and mature calculation ; the follies of fifteen with the frailties of forty.

The British and Scotch Sabbath. A day of sanctity, in which indolent ineptitude passes for religious repose.

To understand the Darwinian theory one should contemplate his fellow-creatures in a Turkish bath.

Lord Clyde's idea of sympathy : ' An ounce of powder is worth a ton of sympathy.' Mere sympathy without assistance dangerous. Irritates one party and misleads the other.

Like a good housewife she treated her lovers on the same principle as her dresses ; when she had worn either long enough, turned them, either about their business or into friends.

B. was void of all weaknesses and had no affections, but rheumatic ones.

How was Midas ruined ? By keeping everything but his accounts.

POLITICAL THOUGHTS.

Mr. Gladstone.

The Milo of politics.

House of Lords.

The House of Lords is too often treated as a dust-bin. All the burnt-out reputations and cinders amongst discredited ministries thrown into the Peers. Compare Brummel's failures in cravats.

Choice of a Leader.

Poeta nascitur, non fit. So with a leader, self-created Disraeli, the leader of Liberal ideas, though working with only Tory soldiers. First catch your party. Construct the body before seeking a head.

Select Committees.

The practice of appointing 'Select Committees to inquire' is a device to ward off votes of censure for ministerial delinquencies. Select Committees act as buffers against an immediate expression of parliamentary opinion.

On Dissolution.

A change of ministers, opportune if not useful. Tends to break up a monopoly of power on one side, and brings forward new blood, and men with fresh ideas, teaching the young and inexperienced the business of Government.

Elections.

An election is not a matter of private interest to the candidate, but of public welfare.

Close boroughs! as defensible as open boroughs which are only open to bribes. In one instance a proprietor received a stated sum for the seat. In the other, a joint proprietorship is established.

An Ideal M.P.

Whilst no position is so enviable as an unfettered M.P., who is trusted by his electors, none so pitiable as one bound

hand and foot by pledges, who cannot be trusted to run alone nor allowed to form an independent judgment. The only pledge is to resign if called on by a majority of electors. If we do not permit our members to act upon enlarged views, we shall infallibly degrade our national representation into a confused and scuffling bustle of local agency, see *Burke*. That consistency which lies in steady fidelity to high and noble aims, is a virtue ; that which lies in an obstinate adherence to the same means and the same men in spite of new knowledge is a blunder.

Reform.

What the nation wants ? a larger infusion of the working class in the possession of the franchise ; a bill necessary which will win the assent of the moderate and thoughtful. Universal suffrage would be class legislation, handing over the State to one section of the community which would swamp all the others. Parliamentary government, based not on representation of numbers, but of classes ; all should have a share, none a monopoly. At present the middle class has more than its proportion of power.

Political Consistency.

Although I am the last to twit any man with a change of opinion, I still have a greater respect for one who commences life with well-considered ideas, and does not 'Jump, Jim Crow' too often in his life.

Home Rule.

Impossible to avoid the question of Home Rule. There are Home Rulers and Home Rulers, each professing the same object with distinct principles : one for strengthening the tie with England, others for separation. The real backbone of the party is Fenian co-operation. Although favourable to great changes in present system of government, such as abolition of the mode of governing by a Viceroy, and not indisposed to see a Royal Prince with an English Parliament sitting for certain seasons in Dublin ; not prepared to support an independent legislature or any measure which might lead to the idea of separation.

Politics.

People have only to meet at that time-honoured and conservative institution, the dinner-table, to find that politics are not the *summum bonum* of social life, and that men may be rivals without being adversaries.

To these may be added the following extracts from his public speeches upon political subjects, more fully illustrating his bent of thought in matters which at present interest the public mind.

Reform.

I prefer to base the franchise, not upon rating, but upon rent. And I will tell you why. In basing it upon rating there is a tendency to throw the power into political associations and overseers.

I think the success of a measure of reform depends very much upon the time it is introduced, the state of feeling in the country, and also the state of education in the country. The legitimate expenses of polling, &c., ought to be put on the public rates.

There was yet another scheme, what was called the representation of minorities, one of those philosophical schemes which I see Mr. Disraeli has denounced. Now, if you are to have minorities represented, I think there is only one plan by which to do it, and that is Cobden's plan, where the great towns were to be divided into wards, and the members each have one vote.

Disraeli's Reform Bill a revolutionary measure. For I never wish to see the county and borough franchise put upon the same footing. Let the agriculturalists have their fair share, let the towns have their fair share. I think it is a mistake in this old country to make all the suffrage to rest on one dead level.

On Office.

A public office, if taken by the consent of your constituents, and on the highest ground of benefiting your fellow

men, is an object of fair ambition to an Englishman, and ought not to be thrown in his teeth. But if obtained by mean arts and by creeping on his belly, it is looked upon with contempt by all honest men.

Crimean War.

Looking back on my vote on that occasion I have seen serious reason to find fault with it, because I am now of opinion that that war was an unnecessary one. But we all went mad together at that time.

Mr. Disraeli.

To whose intellectual powers I am the first to do homage. However much I may have been opposed to him, I say he is a man of mark and one of the ornaments of the age. I have been so long in politics that even in a bishop I can spy desert.

Electoral Corruption.

What we have to dread more than anything in a representative government is not the advance of democracy, not the giving of a vote to the working man, but the dreadful power of corruption, which is making way in the country. It has always appeared to me there is the greatest danger of the Commons House of Parliament becoming a rich man's club rather than a mechanics' institute. I shall ever lay my finger upon this plague-spot in our constitution. Owing to the rapid accumulation of wealth, the formation of railways, and the speculation in our colonies, you have now a class of men who are determined to look upon Parliament as an investment . . . they are prepared to give any sum of money to corrupt men's minds and debauch the intellect. It is a growing and gigantic evil—until corruption can be made unfashionable—that is the great word in this country—until some millionaire who has scattered the seed of corruption broadcast is pilloried and pelted in Palace Yard and made infamous, in vain will you have committees sitting, in vain reports will be made about corrupt practices which have taken place ; the whole thing will go on and money will do its work.

Home Rule.

No man who has lived in Ireland can deny the strong feeling of nationality which exists in the Irish mind, and no man knows better than I do that the feeling is not to be smoothed down or got rid of by measures extorted by Parliamentary necessity. The Irish are looking for something more, whatever that may be. There are many interpretations of Home Rule. If Home Rule means local government for local purposes, and if for Imperial purposes the Crown is kept as it is, I see no great objection to Home Rule. But, unfortunately, that is not the idea of Home Rule entertained by ardent enthusiasts. Home Rule with them means secession, and if it comes to secession I say this—great as is my desire to be in this Parliament, proud as I am of my connexion with Ireland, and more particularly of the constituency that I represent, ready as I am to make some sacrifice, I am not ready to make a sacrifice of principle, and I say to them, in the words of Sir Richard Lovelace :—

I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.

Therefore, when you talk to me of Home Rule, I say, 'Define what Home Rule means.' Do not let us Irish members go over in a body without knowing exactly what Home Rule means; do not let us give way to the screw that is put upon us. I go for Home Rule under proper circumstances and reservations; but I abhor secession, because I know the first thing would be the military subjugation of Ireland. I have been induced to make these remarks in consequence of what was said by the hon. member for Cork (Mr. Maguire), and I thank the House for having listened to me so long.—*House of Commons Debates on Ballot, 1871.*

The Cabinet Coach.

Driven by Gladstone with rather a scratch political team. The wheelers of the old Whig breed—slow, but not remarkably sure, and given to stumble. The leaders apt to overpull the driver, and do all the work. The coachman too fond of galloping down hill, while the rising Whig guard disappoints

the steady-going passengers by blowing his horn instead of looking to his drag. The days of Patent Safety are gone!

Neutrality and Intervention.

Neutrality does not mean a selfish indifference to our neighbours ; mediation does not imply offensive intervention.

Permissive Bill.

You know we Liberals have a great many prophets among us, all advocating different things. We have got Tichbornites and women's righters, a most respectable thing ; then we have the great water-god of Carlisle. I am not going to say anything against him or his principles. I respect his principles. But are they consonant with the freedom of Englishmen? No! I think not. First of all he produces one baby—a water baby. It was called the Permissive Bill—his eldest child. Well, the Permissive Bill was a most tyrannical attempt to inflict upon a minority the wishes and the tastes of a majority. I think it was founded on entire ignorance. I go as far as what the Bishop of Peterborough said—I would sooner see England free than sober.

CHAPTER XXXII.

INTELLECT—CHARACTER—CONVERSATION—WIT.

BERNAL OSBORNE's political career extended from 1841 to 1874, a period of thirty-three years. During that time he fought nine contested elections, and two election petitions. Six seats he won, and three he lost, and only once was he returned to Parliament without a severe contest. The poll-books of the United Kingdom may be searched in vain for a similar record. Mr. Disraeli once on this subject turned the laugh very successfully against Osborne with a characteristic piece of Parliamentary by-play. While reviewing some of his opponents' arguments, he said, 'With regard to the speech of the hon. member for ——,' then hesitating with an air of affected forgetfulness he added, 'I really just at this moment forget what constituency the hon. member at present represents'—a thrust of the rapier which delighted the House, and which no one appreciated more than Osborne himself.

Osborne's various political vicissitudes were a good deal owing to his sense of personal strength in platform performances, combined with a thorough knowledge of the art of electioneering. For many years of his life he was considered the strongest Liberal candidate that could possibly be found to fight a seat, and this fact and his almost invariable success made him careless of the customary political blandishments, without which

constituencies (being human) are unable long to remain faithful to their representatives.

Whilst careless of his own personal convenience or political advancement he displayed great solicitude and kindness to friends in need. To those who sought his political influence, to obtain some advancement or appointment, he was most kind and obliging. Many instances could be commemorated of Osborne's activity in doing unsolicited acts of kindness to deserving individuals who were without the ordinary means of advancement. Expressions of affection and gratitude are still forthcoming from many for whose interests he had put himself to considerable pains and trouble.

Humour is closely allied to pathos, and Bernal Osborne, with his keen intellect and sharp tongue, had withal a curious sensibility to suffering, want, and evil circumstances; as, for instance, he never could refuse to give alms to a beggar. His most intimate friends always speak of the 'soft spot' in his character in a manner which might well astonish the ordinary outside world, whose opinion upon a many-sided character is generally narrow and unjust.

The qualities which made Bernal Osborne so strong a candidate at the hustings were indeed the same, written large for the multitude, as procured him the ear of the House of Commons. Those qualities were rare and unmistakable. His claim to be considered a representative man is none the less strong because the class he represented has been and will always be a very small one in England. Osborne was, by birth, a wit of a very high order. It is as a political wit, and not as a statesman or a politician, that he must be recognised and estimated, although, as we have shown,

he often displayed remarkable prescience and sagacity in affairs of State.

His *forte* was ridicule; ridicule without which argument buries itself in vain in the sandbag fortifications of stupidity; ridicule which has ever been the most compendious form of argument, and which has led the van of all political movements from the days of Aristophanes to the days of Swift. For this Osborne had a perfect genius. He possessed the derisive faculty to an abnormal degree. He had a keen eye for the imperfection of human nature, and saw that continual contradiction between the acts of man and his aspirations which forms the proverbial step between the sublime and the ridiculous. Moreover, he had a nice insight and appreciation of the power and impulses of human action, which is always a proof of a character somewhat out of the common.

It was by his pithy summaries of political events, his clean, cutting strokes of description or influence, his broad, clear statements of facts, that he won the reputation, always for wit, and sometimes for wisdom, which he undoubtedly deserved; and this power of seeing the ludicrous side of life made him equally popular in the House and on the platform.

During his lifetime Osborne had to suffer many a sarcasm, in private as well as in public, upon the use of his favourite weapon. Both pen and pencil were enlisted to write him down the House of Commons Jester, the Parliamentary Buffoon, or the political Joe Miller. For a country where gravity is invariably taken to pass current for wisdom this is not surprising. Certainly no man in public life ever had more frequent occasion to lament his powers of ridicule than Bernal Osborne; when they were combined (as he often used

to admit) with a loud voice and high animal spirits, the result was disastrous to a public reputation for solidity and sagacious judgment.

It has been well said that in these islands the laws of politics are, in such matters, the converse of the laws of nature. For whereas by natural laws man sinks by gravity and rises by levity, in politics he rises by his gravity and sinks by his levity. This was particularly true as regards Osborne's career. His wit was not recognized from its intrinsic political value. It was appreciated, laughed at, applauded for its momentary personal point, but laid aside, on matters of opinion, as light and unsteady. Such an idea of the use of ridicule is contrary to the facts of history and the grave opinion of historians. Mr. Kinglake¹ has declared that 'what commonly makes England possible is the swift, trenchant argument of ridicule,' more effective, searching, and intelligible than select committees and all the paraphernalia of parliamentary inquiries. But, despite all this, the mass of mankind still continue to call the political wit a mere jester, and fail to see how his jests clear the air, crystallize the ideas, and turn the scales of political thought. Until it is recognized that

¹ 'The English are not a logical people, and so ill-versed in abstractions, so dimly acquainted with the idea of what a Continental mind would accept as a "principle," that to guide them in their search after truth they have not the clue of pure reason. Under such conditions they are for the most confined to two methods. When adopting the first one they seek after truth by travelling through masses of detail, and the conclusions they reach in that way are not only apt to be just but suggestive of wise and moderate though somewhat clumsy measures. The obvious fault of the method is its extreme slowness, a slowness so hampering that if there were no other expedient, the whole country would be passing its life in a political jury box, for ever, for ever, for ever inquiring, inquiring, inquiring. What commonly makes England possible is the second method, and that is the swift trenchant argument of ridicule.'—*The Invasion of the Crimea*, by A. W. Kinglake (sixth edition, vol. vii. p. 242).

wisdom is not synonymous with gravity, and that wit—originally the name for all intellectual powers—is still the language of wisdom, the philosophy of mirth must remain a dead letter. Rightly appreciated, the career of Bernal Osborne must illustrate this truth. Beneath the transient popularity of the platform and the parliamentary bench, there was an unspoken conviction that under the garb of epigram, joke, or repartee there often lay in Osborne's speeches the best possible arguments and the most comprehensive principles. The public Press often recognised it, and wise men knew it; but the world laughed at the jest and saw nothing beyond it.

There is an old description of what used to be called 'facetiousness,' which gives in a short space the entire armoury of wit. Judged by its standard, Bernal Osborne was as well equipped as any of his class.

'Sometimes it lieth' (says Dr. Barrow) 'in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale; sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound; sometimes it is wrapped up in a dress of humorous expression; sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude; sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting or cleverly retorting an objection; sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or in acute nonsense; sometimes a scenical representation of persons or things, a counterfeit speech, a mimical look or gesture passeth for it; sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness giveth it being; sometimes it riseth only from a lucky hitting upon what is strange; sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose. Often it consisteth in one hardly knows what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how, being answerable to the numberless rovings of fancy and windings of language.'

It would be hard to say which of these numerous forms of wit and humour Bernal Osborne did not at some time illustrate during his career. But he was more witty than humorous, taking wit to mean the attacking, destructive, antagonistic faculty. As a boy he had been a satirist, and as a man he partook more of the nature of Aristophanes, of Juvenal, of Swift, and of Byron than of those creators of humorous character with which our English literature abounds. In the intellectual battles of the House of Commons, Osborne's wit was invaluable, exposing sophistries which eluded grave arguments, and transfixing bigotry with the keen shaft of ridicule.¹

¹ His speech against the motion for an inquiry into conventual and monastic institutions illustrated his intense hatred of bigotry. The following description by an eye-witness is interesting. Osborne was at the time Secretary to the Admiralty. It was a scene, his speech, from beginning to end ; for this is a Parliament including a hundred or two new men, who only know Bernal Osborne by reputation—who never heard him till Tuesday night. The smoking-room and the tea-room emptied when the word was passed who was 'up,' and for an hour he kept a full house alive with delight. He is one of those speakers—Mr. Disraeli is another—who cannot be reported ; for he is an actor ; and you get no better impression of him by reading his speech than you would get of Charles Mathews if you went to Lacy's and bought a copy of the *Game of Speculation*. Those who have only read his Tuesday's speech will think it exaggerated description to speak of such an address charming the first assembly in the world ; but it is, nevertheless, a fact. The House would any day sooner hear Osborne than one of its crack statesmen ; indeed, rather than Macaulay. The House is conscientious, and will cheer and counter-cheer a Minister with assiduity ; but it is an assembly of average men of the world and boys of the town, and it has a strong taste for being amused. And Mr. Bernal Osborne is amusing ; he is something more ; if he chose he could be a great Liberal leader ; but he has selected his rôle—to be amusing. He is amusing because he has studied the House, and knows what amuses it—acting accordingly. He acts the natural parts ; he is really one of the most careful, but appears a most *déagé*, debater ; his manner is rigidly impulsive ; and his jokes are elaborately impromptu. His speeches are merely smart conversations ; the style is a familiar style—he takes Mr. Speaker by the button and winks at 'out of doors.' A satirist should be gentlemanly,

On one occasion he set the whole country laughing by an explanation. It was made the subject of grave complaint that in one of his public speeches he had called the Marylebone Vestry a set of political tinkers. On being asked to explain what he meant, Osborne at once said there must be some mistake in the report of his speech, because what he really did say was that they were 'political thinkers.'

There was one form of humour, however, in which Osborne seldom indulged, and that was the pun. Once, in the House of Commons, he indulged in a classical allusion which partook of the nature of a pun. A debate was going on over the Union of Benefices Bill, and the discussion turned upon burial-grounds and the removal of the bodies from thirty London churches. Mr. Henley had objected to Mr. Ayrton having classified persons who had had the misfortune to die before him under the general head of 'bones,' and Osborne asked, across the House, if there was not a proverb, '*de mortuis nil nisi bonum.*' But such a punning outburst was with him a very rare occurrence.

No man, perhaps, ever exercised greater personal influence upon the House of Commons than Osborne,

but also careless, and Mr. Osborne's satirical speeches are so effective because of the absence of consciousness in his manner. He has been compared to Mr. Disraeli, but there is only such a comparison as there is between the rapier and the broadsword ; Mr. Disraeli thrusts, and Mr. Osborne knocks. On Tuesday he rattled terrible jokes over the head of Mr. Newdegate, who looked like a statue getting dusted ; and it is noticeable that those who laughed loudest were Mr. Newdegate's friends. It is always effective in the House to ridicule bigotry ; for though bigots' votes are given there, there are very few bigots. Free talk to free thinkers is safe ; and Mr. Osborne's hits at Protestantism told enormously, both with Catholics and Tories ! Perhaps the white neckcloth interest in the county of Middlesex may not appreciate a member who shocks T. Chambers, and throws Mr. Lucas, of the *Tablet*, into convulsions of laughter. But Mr. Osborne is bold, and at any rate is fond of being cheered in the House.—*The Leader*, April 1, 1854.

not so much in his set speeches, but by the mere magnetism of his presence. His great animal spirits seemed to invigorate and cheer the benches. He kept the House alive by his *sotto voce* remarks, which everybody heard, by his boyish practical jokes and his incessant chaff and banter. No one could help laughing when on a dull Wednesday in a thin House he would lean over and in an audible whisper say to a well-known member, 'Now, I say, Gilpin, are you or are you not a lineal descendant of the original John Gilpin?' Whereupon Mr. Gilpin would turn round somewhat sternly and say: 'Now, really, Mr. Osborne——.' But the roars of laughter which followed the observation would interrupt the remonstrance.

Osborne's principal butts in the House were the humdrum doctrinaire Radicals, who had a profound horror of his penetrating arrows which found out the weak joints of their philosophical harness. To keep him at arm's length they assumed very ceremonious airs, and always addressed him as 'Sir.' But it was of no avail. His sallies were inevitable, and he contrived many a laugh against a class of men for whom his strong practical mind had a good deal of contempt.

Mr. Whalley's name will long be remembered as one of the curiosities of English political life. He had a large Protestant following out of doors, who believed with him that the Jesuit order had only one object in life, which was the destruction of Protestant England. Osborne never lost an opportunity of 'drawing' Whalley, who was always rising to address the House in season and out of season. One night he had risen at stated periods during the whole sitting, but without success. At last, about two o'clock, when it

was the 'evident sense' of the House that the question should be put, the Speaker rose and amid dead silence began to put the question. Suddenly Osborne shouted : 'Now's your time, Whalley!' and such was the commanding tone of his voice, ringing as it did through the whole House, that Whalley rose like a machine and began : 'Mr. Speaker, Sir,——' Then burst forth a babel of tongues, mingled with shouts of laughter and roars of 'divide,' until at last Whalley, having spoken for some few minutes, sat down panting but satisfied.

It was these Parliamentary practical jokes no doubt that induced the House to look upon Osborne more as a jester than as a serious politician ; but none the less they ensured his popularity with all parties. 'To be sent home laughing heartily at some such quaint incident as the above was often a mental refreshment, delightful at the time and always to be remembered.

But brilliant and irresistibly captivating as is the quality of wit, the rewards for it are not perhaps encouraging. A bishop once said to his chaplain : 'What is wit?' The chaplain replied : 'The rectory of so-and-so is vacant, give it to me and that will be wit.' 'Prove it,' said the bishop, 'and the living is yours.' 'It would be a good thing, well applied,' rejoined the chaplain, and he was forthwith appointed. Such an instance is probably exceptional. Bernal Osborne cannot be described as a successful politician. It has been well observed that 'wit may do very well for a mistress, but that reason makes the better wife. By deserting the latter and giving himself up entirely to the former a man will certainly fall into many pitfalls and quagmires.' The saying is applicable to Bernal Osborne. He preferred the splendid but transient

triumphs of his witty tongue to the loaves and fishes of office, and was content to influence the public opinion of the moment, rather than deserve the more lasting reputation of a 'potent, grave, and reverend seignior.' Still he possessed in a high degree what Macaulay calls 'the parliamentary talent,' and fully understood the tone and temper of the House of Commons.

As a conversationalist Osborne was very brilliant, his fault lying perhaps in becoming at times too much the 'autocrat of the dinner-table.' In his talk there was no verbosity. With him condensation was the rule, and he would often put into one sentence a fine generalization. He had, moreover, remarkable descriptive powers, hitting off by a process of mental photography men's characteristics, and reproducing them with genuine dramatic instinct. For instance, asking once at one of his elections who was the author of a certain hostile placard, a friend tried to recall to Osborne's memory a man whom he had met in the street a few hours previously. After a slight pause, suddenly remembering, he exclaimed: 'Oh yes! you mean that man with a Tyburn face.' This description raised a general laugh, more especially as the individual in question had got a slight twist in his neck. This being mentioned, Osborne promptly added: 'Yes, yes, my dear sir, as if the creature had been imperfectly operated upon!' The habitual keen observation which enabled him to characterize in this manner was also of extraordinary use during his platform orations. Anyone who interrupted him was invariably detected, and Osborne, seizing at once upon some personal characteristic or resemblance, never failed to single the individual out of the crowd and hold him up to the ridicule of his neighbours.

In private life also he was fond of chaffing some one person in a company, and if he liked anyone who was shy or diffident, he would often banter him into a pleasant prominence in a good-humoured way, which was often encouraging and useful. On the other hand, sullen or churlish natures disliked his pertinacious attacks, and in this way, no doubt, he made many enemies.

Of the best part of his conversation, general society knew nothing. He was, as has been observed before, a voracious reader, especially of biography and history ; and there were few families or country houses in England or Ireland about which he had not something to say. He would tell where pictures and statues and books and manuscripts were to be found—who built one house in the reign of Henry VI., and who occupied another in the reign of Charles II. The most accomplished and successful of jokers, he was pleasantest when he was not joking. The broad stream of personal anecdote and reminiscence flowed easily onward, and carried the listener with it.

The critical faculty was largely developed in the man ; indeed it may perhaps be considered the intellectual faculty which most distinguished him. The habitual independent exercise of it—for it was his boast that he always dealt with questions upon their intrinsic merits—no doubt disqualified him for the rôle of a useful party man, and, more than aught else, served to mar the success of a political career which otherwise might have culminated in high office. But Osborne never could resist the temptation to say a smart thing. The keenness of his satire was his greatest stumbling block, for although the shaft was never winged by personal spleen or private malice, its point

never failed to penetrate deeply, and in too many instances left rancorous memories behind. He would often exclaim to an intimate friend: 'Oh, S—, if you only were to know how much my jokes have cost me!'

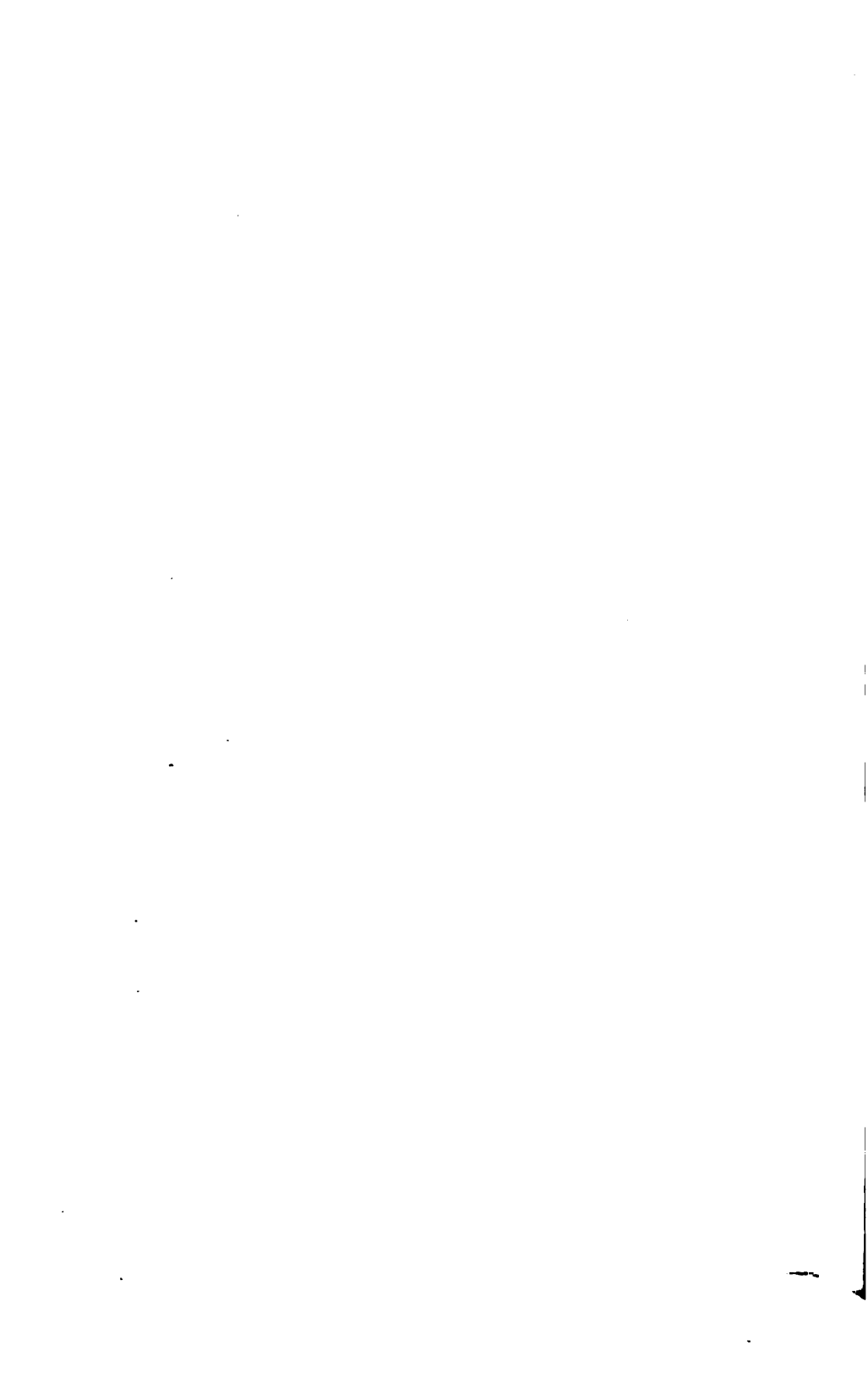
One curious characteristic was his acute sensitiveness in some things. So keen was it that he frequently lost all control over his temper, and then there was no amount of rudeness of which he was not capable. Cool, collected, and expert as he was in debate, there was an occasion even in public when this sensitiveness to a gesture or some such apparently trivial matter drove him out of his habitual self-possession. At the hustings, during the first Waterford election, the proposer or seconder of one of the candidates, not content with praising his own favourite, coarsely attacked Osborne, to whom he over and over again alluded as 'this old fool,' 'the old humbug,' &c., &c, emphasizing, moreover, each epithet by jerking his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of his antagonist, who was seated behind. This grotesque piece of pantomime went on for nearly half-an-hour, during which Osborne was gradually waxing more and more wroth, until at last it was only by main force he was prevented from doing personal violence to his tormentor. Subsequent explanations in private involved a rather curious disclosure. 'It was not the language of the man,' he said, 'that pained me; to that I was perfectly indifferent. But the thumb! the horrible thumb! That goaded me almost to madness! It actually fascinated me. More like the claw of a vulture than anything human; during the whole time it kept darting towards me it never even once failed to pierce to the very marrow of my sensitiveness, and to send a thrill of horror and of loathing through my frame.'

It was, perhaps, part and parcel of this quality which made him particularly careful in his own dress and appearance, and neat in his habits, down even to wiping his pen after he had done writing a letter.

To the end of his life Osborne was fond of sport, and kept up his attendance at Newmarket and Tattersall's, while for Mr. Tattersall himself he had always a warm personal friendship. The atmosphere of the Turf was particularly congenial to one who was so much alive to the pleasures of easy intercourse and conversation between man and man. The omnium-gatherum of a race-meeting, with its opportunities for seeing men and studying human nature, as well as for watching good sport, was a never-failing delight to Osborne.

None who knew Bernal Osborne doubted that he was a man of great powers and an original and independent thinker. The question has therefore been often asked why one who did so much with so little effort had not done a great deal more. The answer must be that he was not really ambitious. His manner of life almost proves it. He never liked to be alone. He abhorred seclusion, and was always keen for what was going to happen, not for any personal or private reason, but out of pure love of the excitement engendered by the kaleidoscope of politics. He never had a private sitting-room during the many parliamentary months out of the season that he used to live in Pall Mall, whilst his family were at Newtown Anner. His was no brooding mind. He liked personal intercourse with men, and the lively give-and-take of politics and society, and had no taste for the endless toil which leads to and accompanies the cares of State. We are told, on high authority, that the desire of fame is at

best an infirmity; if so, Osborne had not that infirmity. He was content to live and shine in the present, and cared little for the posthumous reputation which is perhaps the greatest part of what men call Fame. And yet, putting aside official advancement, and considering the independent part he played in the political drama of his generation, Osborne cannot be considered to have failed. The more we study the coming influences of political life the more we must regret the inevitable extinction of the independent politician. Even in the present Parliament the loss of a political wit is almost irreparable, and those who sit in the House of Commons and remember the days that are past, may well murmur sadly to themselves, 'Oh for one half-hour of Bernal Osborne!'



APPENDIX.

A.

To the Right Honourable Lord John Russell, &c.

MY LORD,—When you undertook the duties and responsibilities of government, a confident expectation was entertained by a great body of your supporters that you would have given some early and satisfactory solution to the question, ‘How is the government of Ireland to be beneficially administered?’ Sir R. Peel had already anticipated you in passing a large measure of commercial reform, and it was supposed *you* were prepared with a series of statesmanlike measures, which would have improved the social condition of the Irish peasant, while they gave additional security to the Irish landlord. Ireland, in fact, was the theatre on which you were to eclipse the rival minister, and to make a reputation worthy of your name and lineage.

Long before your accession to office, when the fear of a scarcity in Ireland had been entertained, it was hinted you would propose some large and comprehensive plan of taxation to ‘facilitate the employment of the labouring classes’ in the event of your being called to power. I pass over preliminary measures as regards Ireland; amongst others, an Arms Bill, brought forward without deliberation, and abandoned on compulsion, was in the eyes of many a bad omen of your future administrative efforts! I come to a subject which more immediately presses on public attention, viz., ‘A Bill to facilitate the Employment of the Labouring Poor in Ireland;’ and, before entering into its demerits, permit me to observe that, strongly as I deprecate that Bill, I have carried it into

force to the best of my power in the various baronies with which I am connected, because I felt the government had left no alternative between the refusal of a bad measure, and the starvation of a people. Indeed, it has occurred to me that this Bill furnished a curious exemplification of the old saw, to the effect that 'one man may take a horse out of the field, whilst another dare not look over the hedge.' What would have been the clamour had the late Government enacted such a Bill, and issued such a Treasury Minute as that dated August 31, 1846? We should have heard loud denunciations of the incompetency of the Saxon to legislate for Ireland? and the impossibility of obtaining 'justice to Ireland' from aught but a Parliament assembled in College Green. Not that my attachment to British connexion is shaken by your lordship's measure. *I am opposed to a repeal of the union, even in spite of your legislation*; for it ought not to be forgotten that some of the wisest and most discreet Irishmen are leading members of your Government; a nobleman, who is a resident Irish proprietor, wears the 'likeness of a kingly crown,' in the castle of Dublin. It is but fair to suppose (if a lord lieutenant be of any service) that he would be consulted on a measure for 'facilitating the employment of the Irish poor.' My Lord Besborough must have *advised* if he did not *suggest* the *introduction* of such a measure, and when an Irishman of his lordship's high reputation promulgates such enactments for the salvation of his country, what hope would there be for Ireland in restoring her House of Peers?

Can your lordship be fully informed as to the state of this unfortunate country?—are you aware that in some baronies they have lately presented sums of money *exceeding* the valuation of the rental of those baronies, on the speculation that they can never be called on to repay the borrowed money?—further, are you aware that the entire of this money will be laid out *on works of public inutility*?—that we are literally endeavouring to 'make *mountains of mole-hills*,' laying out roads which lead nowhere, and planning works which will benefit no one but the county surveyors; creating, in fact, a gigantic system of '*unproductive labour*, to be repaid by *borrowed money*,' introducing habits of *laborious indolence* in

the shape of breaking stones, amongst an agricultural population, whilst the land which is to pay for all will derive no benefit from the labour about to be wasted on the roads? I believe there is but one opinion amongst all classes, of the mischievous tendencies of this measure. Mr. Poulett Scrope himself would never have contemplated such a scheme of out-door relief; his plan was to employ the able-bodied poor on *productive labour*, nor does he dispute the fact that if employment does not pay for itself and enable the rate-payers to meet the increase of taxation, they (the rate-payers) must eventually be classed amongst the destitute poor. For my own part I would infinitely prefer the enactments of the 43rd of Elizabeth, to the introduction of an Act which trains labourers to the demoralising work of breaking stones, and offers a premium to indolence and road-jobbing. But a word as to the celebrated minute of August 31. If there be one paragraph clearer than another in this confused document, it is the one which commands that grants made under the 9th Victoria, chap. 21, and 9th Victoria, c. 1, are to be forthwith stopped, and in place of finishing these works, or expending the balance of the grant upon them, the funds necessary for their completion can only be obtained under the 9th Victoria, c. 10, in which case the whole of the remaining cost will fall upon the baronies, to the dissatisfaction of the rate-payers and other individuals who were induced to commence these works on an understanding that a portion of the expense should be charged on the State; *this is a free use of the sponge*, which was so ably advocated by the late Mr. Cobbett, in other words, a *breach of faith* on the part of the Government. But I come to another clause: viz., the one which orders that 'the wages given to a person employed on relief works should in every case be *at least 2d.* a day less than the average rate of wages in the district.' The Chancellor of the Exchequer is lately reported to have said this was but a *suggestion*, at any rate it is one on which the officers of the Board of Works are *compelled to act*. Now I am well aware it will be said by the political economists who 'live at ease' in the Treasury that 'the wages of labour are regulated by the proportion between the supply and demand of necessaries and the sup-

ply and demand of labour ;' moreover, that 10*d.* a day is a 'high rate of wages in Ireland.' This may be conclusive reasoning in ordinary times—how stands the case at present? The entire food of the population has been lost, and the only resource on which they can depend is that of Indian meal ; now, in your lordship's speech of August 17, you held out hopes that this Indian meal would be *retailed* to the people at one penny per lb., so that (I quote your reported speech) '*one penny per day* would provide enough sustenance for an adult.' The Chancellor of the Exchequer also intimated on that occasion 'that the supply of meal might be safely left to the merchants, as they would be able to sell Indian meal at the *rate of one penny per lb. !*' It so happens that ever since these remarkable declarations the price of Indian meal has been *rising*, and is at this minute *retailed* at 1*s.* 8*d.* per stone, and in many parts of the country as high as 1*s.* 10*d.* I would ask how are labouring men to support themselves on 8*d.* a day, if the miller be allowed to make his own market at their expense? Add to this, that all sorts of provisions are rising, and then say if it will be practicable to carry out the decrease of wages as suggested by the Treasury Minute? For this state of things, to use the words of Mr. Ricardo, 'no Legislature can afford a remedy, except by the *importation of additional food* or by adopting the most useful substitutes.' Government must, in spite of all these abstract objections to interference with the regular trade, *immediately* form depôts for the sale of Indian meal at the *cost price*, in *all parts* of the country ; the sum of 50,000*l.* for establishing commissariats in the inaccessible parts of Ireland will be of no avail : the destitution is *universal*—the remedies must be of a like character. Mr. Burke, in his 'Thoughts and Details on Scarcity,' says : 'What if the rate of hire to the labourer falls far short of his necessary subsistence, and the calamity of the time is so great as to threaten actual famine? Is the poor labourer to be abandoned to the flinty and griping hand of base self-interest, supported by the sword of the law? In that case my opinion is this, whenever a man can claim nothing according to the rule of commerce and the principles of justice, he passes out of that department and comes within the jurisdiction of

mercy!’ Such, my lord, is a fitting reply on behalf of the starving people of this country to the suggestion of the Treasury Minute.

But it will naturally be asked from what fund are we to provide for the labouring poor? My reply is, that the landlords do not quarrel with the *imposition*, but the *application* of the tax. All parties are agreed that the only plan by which the wants of the people can be relieved is one which will make it the interest of the landlords to employ the poor who belong to their estates; you have no right to tax the landlord for the support of another man’s pauper tenants. The present enactment is a direct impediment in the way of an improving proprietor, and will inflict an infinite degree of private loss, without effecting any corresponding public good. I do not urge the levying of a tax on the mortgagee, since it may be a matter of doubt if such a measure would be practicable, even if it were just; but surely persons deriving jointures and annuities from land might justly be called on to furnish their quota of taxation in aid of the public distress. But while various remedies have been suggested for the removal of the difficulties which beset Irish proprietors, I think one remedy has not yet been fully discussed, viz., *the removal of Irish entails*. If your lordship will turn to the report of Lord Devon’s commission, page 27, you will see that it strongly recommends ‘giving greater facilities for the sale of landed estates.’ Indeed, the laws with regard to the transfer of real property—the settlements, charges, &c.—are one cause of the backward state of this country. Out of a population of 8,000,000, there are scarcely 8,000 proprietors in fee, and there are few spots in Ireland (as I have been informed on competent authority) where the blighting influence of the law as relates to real property is not traceable, and unless greater facilities be given for the circulation of land by purchase there can be no effectual improvement in Ireland. It is difficult of credence, but it is a fact, that scarcely one man in 100,000 lives in his own house, rent being paid for it in some shape or another. To buy a spot free from rent is most difficult: large estates may be purchased, but to sell an estate is an affair of enormous expense, and owing to the defective

nature of Irish titles, the purchase is a **matter** of risk and time. Would it not be in the power of Government to remedy this state of things without any **eventual** loss to the public ; viz., by lending money at a moderate rate of interest (say three and a half per cent.), to landholders for the clearance of their properties from debt ? The proprietors who were willing to avail themselves of such loans should be allowed to surrender their properties to the Government ; the loans thereon should be for any time not exceeding twenty-five years ; there should be a final settlement at the end of this period, and if it should be necessary to sell a portion of the property, such portion should be sold, the purchaser receiving a title from the Government. The object of this plan, which is but faintly shadowed out, is to give the present owners of real property the means of extricating themselves from their difficulties in a manner as easy and simple as is the transfer of funded property.

No entail under a new title should be allowed. Lessees in actual possession under a lease for ever should have the right (as Crown rents are bought up) to redeem all rent, paid to head landlords. The system of granting leases for ever is most injurious to the country ; no lease, except for proposals of building and reclaiming land, should exceed thirty years ; but leases should be universal.

Whatever may be thought of these suggestions, one thing is quite evident, viz., that if Government persists in levying and applying the relief tax in its present mode, the property of Ireland must speedily change hands. The English press, with its enormous influence, is occupied in *preaching a crusade against Irish landlords* ; the eccentric opinions of Lord Mountcashel are taken as a faithful exposition of the feelings and logic of all Irish proprietors ; in addition to this, you, my lord, have *brought forward a 'comprehensive plan' for their ruin !* Now, without attempting to defend the specific acts of a large class who are little known but much abused, I will take upon myself to affirm, that Irish landlords are fair *average specimens of their kind* ; they may not be all that a speculative writer could wish, but they are not such as the English newspapers represent. I have not stooped to flatter

them in prosperity ; but I cannot see a large body of my countrymen (who have the misfortune to be Irish landlords, and who, I beg the English public to recollect, are *not represented in the House of Commons*), described as a heartless race, altogether at variance with their humbler brethren, without raising my voice, however feeble, on their behalf, and entering my protest against the introduction of a system of taxation which will at once despoil the proprietor of his land, and convert the agricultural labourer into a demoralised pauper, a mingled union of profligate road-jobbing and laborious indolence.

It is not by sending an Irish nobleman to preside over the festivities of Dublin that Ireland can be elevated from her present degrading condition ; *the entire system of Irish government must be changed*, from the Lord-Lieutenant in the Castle to the rate-payer in his cabin. The country expects something more from a Liberal administration than paltry shifts and miserable expedients. Should your lordship be disposed to make a vigorous attempt at reform, you will find many more able supporters, though few more willing than

Your lordship's humble servant,

RALPH OSBORNE.

September 22, 1846.

B.

To the Resident Proprietors of Small Landed Estates in Ireland.

November 28, 1846.

GENTLEMEN,—At the risk of appearing troublesome and importunate, I again submit for your consideration, not the propriety, but the absolute necessity of taking some more energetic measures in defence of your estates than you have hitherto pursued. It is of little use for you to rest satisfied with recording protests against the Labour Rate Act at extraordinary presentment sessions ; the Board of Works entertain no sympathy with such complaints ; your poison is their sustenance. Of equal inutility are the speeches and resolutions made at county meetings ; the English press decries

your patriotism and ridicules your resolutions ; witness the criticisms on the Waterford demonstration ! What constitutional step remains for you to take ? It is my humble opinion, that in place of frittering away your energies in local meetings, your only chance of being recognised and respected as an influential body, having a large stake in the welfare of the country, is, for your most active members to assemble together in Dublin, for the purpose of taking into consideration the unexampled difficulties which encompass all classes of the community. You will call to mind that some two months ago the mere rumour of such an assemblage was the means of inducing his Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to take, what was then thought to be, the wise course of setting aside an Act of Parliament ; a responsibility which subsequent events proved not to be of a very onerous nature, inasmuch as no man can take advantage of the supposed benefits which were to result from the Viceregal reading of the Act, without saddling himself with a double portion of the baronial taxation. The new reading has, however, been of some service, though not to the landlords ; but the country gentlemen were delighted with the idea at the time, and a combination which might have proved disagreeable, if not formidable, to the administration, was nipped in the bud. Recently proprietors have discovered the illusions of draining with Government loans ; they are, in fact, in as sorry a condition as when the requisition for convening a meeting in Dublin was first mooted. The gentlemen who then signed that requisition will be no doubt most ready again to come forward, and convene the meeting of landed proprietors, which on a late occasion they somewhat hastily abandoned.

In urging the adoption of such a proceeding, I must at once disclaim any hostility to the present Government. I admit the difficult position in which they are placed, and the utter impossibility of their legislating so as to satisfy all parties. I give Lord John Russell full credit for boldness of conception and integrity of purpose, though somewhat chilling in his expressions of sympathy towards Irish landlords ; but as the embarrassments of the landed proprietors are in my eyes of equal importance with those of Her Majesty's ministers,

especially as the former class are not represented in the British House of Commons, and as I am well assured that *governments are more apt to be influenced by 'pressure from without' than a conviction from within*, I feel confident that the landed proprietors will ensure a more respectful attention to their complaints if they determine to state in their collective capacity what measures they would propose to call into action for the maintenance of the population at the present crisis. There is no escape from the fact, that the *principle of unlimited out-door relief* is at this moment in active operation in a most objectionable form; it remains with yourselves to determine how far this may be modified, so at least as to save a remnant of your properties from confiscation.

If it be true in the political world that 'coming events cast their shadows before,' the vehement attacks upon Irish landlords which daily appear in the newspapers which are looked upon as the ministerial organs must have the effect of forewarning you that some enactment will be brought forward, having for its object—to use the words of the *Dublin Evening Post*—'the subversion of landed property in Ireland; that is to say, a bouleversement of the comparatively small estates.' In short, the landed property in Ireland is in jeopardy, and unless the proprietors are in a condition not merely *to protest, but suggest, they must bear with resignation* the calamities which they have not the ability to mitigate.

I know of no other course likely to be followed by good results than that which was originally recommended and taken up by some members of your body resident in or near Dublin, viz. the convening a meeting of the landed proprietors undeterred by a fear of forwarding the object of the repealers, moral and physical. Whilst I do not participate in this apprehension, let me ask if a repeal of the legislative union could be attended with more disastrous consequences than a continuance of the present system of borrowing money and laying it out on works, not merely unproductive in themselves, but corrupting in their character. Remember, a reckoning day must come, and the English Parliament will insist on the repayment of the borrowed money.

You are in the position of contracting debts for the relief

of the destitute, without conciliating the affections of the labouring class, for they universally regard the funds laid out in destroying the roads as 'Government money;' the consequence is, all the small farmers, particularly in the mountain districts, are entirely neglecting the cultivation of their land, in order to get what they call their 'share of the Government money' on the highways and byways. This threatens to be an evil of such magnitude, it alone requires immediate attention. How will your rents be paid next year, if the land be suffered to go out of cultivation? What is of still greater importance—how are the people to be fed?

I have addressed these few observations to 'the owners of small estates,' because they will be the first victims of the labour rate—not that the 'large-acred men' can eventually escape; theirs, indeed, will be the mournful privilege conceded by Polyphemus to Ulysses—they will be the last doomed.

It is possible this appeal will be disregarded, and more than probable its recommendations will be despised; in any event, should the time arrive when *the duties of property are strictly exacted, and its rights altogether denied*—should a poor law, not of Queen Elizabeth's, but of Mr. Poulett Scrope's construction, be applied to this country, in defiance of the opinion of the landlords, or the principles of the labourers, I shall have the melancholy satisfaction of feeling that these evils were not wholly unforeseen by one who has a common interest with yourselves, and who begs to subscribe himself, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. OSBORNE.

C.

To the Resident Owners of Small Estates in Ireland.

December 17, 1846.

GENTLEMEN,—It is recorded in the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' that the 'Greeks were busily employed in a mixed controversy of metaphysics. philosophy, and

religion, when the unsparing enemy of all religion and philosophy, Mahomet II., entered through a breach into their capital. It has occurred to me that the small party of 'landed proprietors who happened to be in Dublin on the 14th instant' (*vide* the advertisement in the *Evening Mail*) have taken these controversial Greeks for their models, instead of following the course suggested by Mr. Naper, and at once convening an assembly of your body in Dublin. I am informed the majority of the meeting discussed, not the immediate perils of the country, but the contingent misunderstandings to be apprehended from combination; and finally came to the resolution to appoint a 'committee to collect and circulate information, prepare petitions, memorials, &c., &c.' Entertaining the greatest respect for each member of this committee, I would ask, now that the 'revolution is actually in progress,' if it is to be stemmed by such a rose-water application as the appointment of a committee in Sackville Street? Gentlemen, if you wish to continue proprietors of the land, you must show that you are willing and able to take your own parts. I therefore once more earnestly entreat you immediately to sign requisitions in your respective countries, calling together the members of your body, and then and there entering into arrangements for a meeting of the owners of property in the Irish metropolis. Do not be deterred by the vain fear of 'controversial politics' being introduced. This is a 'weak invention' to break up the chance of your coming together. Bear in mind, 'the Labour Rate Act' knows no distinction of persons—Whig, Tory, and Repealer will alike be crushed in its insatiable maw! The time has gone by for the still small whispers of a committee. Governments are proverbially deaf to any sounds but the united voices of large bodies. Should the Labour Rate Act continue in operation for two months longer, how are mortgages to be disbursed, brothers' and sisters' portions to be paid? There is no sympathy for you, as a class, out of Ireland. The English press derides, whilst the Ministry is prepared to sacrifice you. If you wish to ride out the storm, your only harbour of refuge is combination, or else——

Your obedient servant,

RALPH OSBORNE.

D.

*A few words to the Aristocracy, Gentry, and Tenant
Farmers of Ireland.*

December 26, 1846.

Dispirited, but not surprised, at the little effect produced by my late letters in stimulating the landed proprietors to meet together, and concert measures for the defence of their properties, I have ventured to address you, the aristocracy of Ireland, in the hope, however futile, of dissipating an apathy which evinces more of Epicurean sloth than Stoical indifference.

If you understand your own interests, and are not prepared, in blind submission to the Government of the day, 'to lick the hand just raised to shed your blood,' you will, without further delay, come forward, and put yourselves at the head of the national movement, which, sooner or later, will take place in Ireland; failing to do this, rest assured you will be lost in the throng, and displaced by men of less refinement but greater energies and capabilities for action. If the term 'aristocracy' means anything, it imports a body of men who are *best* fitted, from their position and intelligence, to *lead* their fellows, and represent the 'form, and pressure of the time.' The rude Norman Barons who, by their courage and combination, succeeded in extorting the great charter of England from a pusillanimous monarch, were emphatically the *best* men of that period—as such, they deserved the title of an '*aristocracy!*' On the other hand, the polite French noblesse, who, by their inaction, had sacrificed at once their estates and country, thereby abdicated the functions of their station, and were in no sense an 'aristocracy' in the true meaning. Which furnishes the more worthy example—the successful barons of 1215 or the despoiled nobles of 1790? Let us calmly regard *your* situation; an awful *national* calamity has fallen upon the country, which no human foresight could have foreseen. The Ministry, oblivious of the vast sums subtracted from Ireland,

in the shape of quit rents, absenteeism, &c., &c. (sums, which in the one instance are laid out in the architectural monstrosities of London, and in the other, contribute to swell the profits of English tradesmen) have resolved that you, the Irish landed proprietors, should *alone* be saddled with the enormous cost of maintaining the starving millions. Parliament, which, under the circumstances of an impending famine, in my humble judgment, ought never to have separated until it had devised more efficient means of meeting the evil, is to be called together on January 19. Near as this period may seem, depend on it, not a day is to be lost—each hour brings us within the possibility of a state of society which at any moment might assume the form of a servile war. Winter has set in with unwonted rigour, food and fuel are almost unattainable by the destitute; Indian meal, of which, according to the Prime Minister, a labouring man might obtain a day's provision at the cost of *one penny per lb.*, is selling as follows—wholesale price, 18*l.* 10*s.* per ton; retailed in the districts at *threepence halfpenny per lb.*; wholemeal is somewhat dearer; and turnips, which heretofore sold at *fifteen* shillings the ton, are now greedily sought after at 2*l.* the ton! many of the poor living on them raw. Provisions are still expected to rise.—Meanwhile, wages, by a 'pious fraud,' have, in defiance of the notorious Treasury Minute of Aug. 31, been *raised* instead of *reduced* 'at least 2*d.* a day *more* than the average rate of wages in the district!' Yet at the increased rate of wages, they are quite inadequate to supply the labouring classes and their families with the necessities of life at the present exorbitant prices. All things considered, the people are wonderfully patient under their sufferings. They have listened in silence to the dogmas of the strict economists, and - died! But how far can we calculate on the continuance of such resignation? It requires no great share of philosophy to witness the misfortunes of other people; but suppose they come to our own homes? By the Government plan, 300,000 men, women, and children have been elaborately employed in destroying the communications of the country. It appears the bill for this amounts in two months to 442,150*l.* And this bill *you will be called on to pay*—a short Act, making your

estates liable to be impounded for the debt, will speedily pass into a law—no matter that you, the proprietors of the land, *had no voice in laying on the tax, your only business will be to pay it.* Nor is this all. The number that will require to be fed as the winter progresses cannot be reckoned at less than three millions, not including the residents of the poor-houses ! Are we not deeply interested in the solution of the problem, from what quarter is the food to be derived ? Who is to pay for it ? How, in short, are the people to be fed ? The admirers of a state paper style will probably answer after the fashion of the Home Secretary, when replying to a deputation from Skibbereen (which detailed horrors only to be equalled by some passages in the history of the plague at Florence), to the effect, that ‘much must remain to be done by individual owners of property and by private charity.’ (*Vide* Sir G. Grey’s letter, Dec. 9.) Now, the ‘owners of property’ are too well aware that, owing to a widely spread combination among the farmers, rents have not been paid, in spite of the large allowances which have been universally made to tenants by the landowners ; few ‘owners of property’ have received the March, still fewer the September gale. How, then, are they to respond to the frigid intimation conveyed in the letter from Whitehall ? One word to the tenant farmers, who as a class, I grieve to say, are not doing their duty by their landlords, nor are they gaining the confidence or respect of the labouring men ; the consequence will inevitably be, that, however you, tenant farmers, may escape the fulfilment of your just obligations, you will eventually meet your deserts—neither rich nor poor will allow you to reap benefits from a calamity which has as yet fallen heaviest on the two extremes of the community. Be wise, therefore, in time, and unite with the owners of the soil in at least making an attempt to struggle against the manifold evils which beset the country. Lord John Russell, in his able and inclement letter to the Duke of Leinster (which by the way appeared, most aptly, with a frost unequalled for its severity), stated correctly that the Irish haggards were full of corn ; but he omitted to make the natural deduction, that this proved the unwillingness of the farmers to send their corn to market, consequently their

indisposition to pay their rents ; still his lordship hinted the landlords ought to supply food to the millions ! Even at the present moment, though wheat has reached the high figure of two shillings and a halfpenny the stone, very little is coming into the market ; the farmers, in short, will not sell or pay. But, then, the Irish gentry are an unpopular body ; having few friends, and no parliamentary influence, they are in the hands of a Government, who will not let them escape until they have paid the 'uttermost farthing' ! Meantime what are the starving thousands to do ? Have the Commissary-General's lectures on political economy been so widely disseminated that, to use the words of the great writer and statesman whose name has been so often taken in vain, are the destitute aware 'that the labouring people are *only poor because they are numerous—numbers in their nature implying poverty*—and that the class of dependent pensioners called the rich is so *extremely small*, that if all their throats were cut, and a distribution made of all they consume in a year, it would not *give a bit of bread and cheese for one night's supper to those who labour* !' Such, I fear, are not the arguments which will occur to a hungry population.

The only hope of mitigating the calamity is for you, the aristocracy and gentry of Ireland, *to organize a national party*. It is now too late to be turned from this by the sop of a Treasury Minute, excellent as the one dated December 1 is admitted to be. Remember how tardily it came, and in all probability it would still have 'dragged its slow length along,' had there been no *talk* of an aggregate meeting of your body. Away, then, with all such morbid apprehensions as to 'the introduction of controversial politics.' Should you assemble, there will be matters more *serious* for discussion. The time has arrived for a union of all Irish parties, in order that each may not be cut off in detail. To you, the noblemen and gentry, is reserved the honour of putting yourselves at the head of your countrymen. In 1836 you combined and met together for a *mere party purpose*—shall it be said, that in 1847, when famine laid waste the land, and the rights of property became insecure, that the aristocracy were unequal

to the emergency ? That in '36 you strained at the gnat, and swallowed the camel in '47 !

By union and combination, you may make terms with any government, be it Whig or Tory ! whereas if you remain supine and quiescent, you will shrink into the insignificance of men, who at a great crisis were 'weighed in the balance and found wanting.'

I am, with due respect, your obedient servant,

RALPH OSBORNE.

E.

Mr. Bernal Osborne.

All nations, all parties, all men, have their passions and their weaknesses, and we therefore think that the old Whigs of Brooks's ought to moderate the excessive hostility which they are exhibiting against Mr. Bernal Osborne because he has shown temper at the loss of his comfortable seat at Liskeard, and has returned blow for blow when undermined by Mr. Brand. But a few months since Mr. Osborne 'met,' as the phrase is, the electors of Liskeard at a public meeting ; he explained to them the motives which had actuated his parliamentary conduct ; he offered to resign his seat then and there, if his constituents were dissatisfied with him ; and the reply made to his offer was a unanimous vote of confidence in him as their representative. It was not till last week that Mr. Osborne discovered that a plot had been laid to slip Sir Arthur Buller upon him at the general election, and so to exclude him from the next Parliament. This scurvy trick Mr. Osborne met by another, which the old Whigs consider still scurvier. He instantly resigned his seat for Liskeard, and so created a necessity for an immediate election in that borough, and for an immediate contest at Devonport, which Sir Arthur Buller has been forced to vacate in order to secure Liskeard. The thrust which Mr. Osborne received from Mr. Brand was an ugly one, but the ripost which he has succeeded in planting is uglier still. Brooks's has found an antagonist worthy of its steel ; and, in the interests of the Liberal

party, we strongly advise the combatants to shake hands and be friends. What is fun for the Carlton Club is fatal to them.

A truly Christian Whig, when smitten, as Mr. Osborne has been, on the right cheek, would doubtless have turned the left cheek also to the hand of the smiter ; but truly Christian Whigs are rare fowl. Had Mr. Osborne at once admitted his error—had he said, ‘I have blasphemed against the god Pam, and I am no more worthy to represent Liskeard,’ it is probable that he would have stood much better than he now does with the party in power, that he would not have been attacked as savagely as he has been by the ministerial press, that the Irish reporters of our contemporary the *Globe* would not have broken out into doggrel to his disadvantage, that he would have been invited to Cambridge House next Saturday, and that, after due penance and probation, he might have aspired to a card for a Concert at the Palace.

But instead of acting in a reverent and contrite spirit, Mr. Osborne has recalcitrated under the correcting lash—he has flurried the easy-going Sir Arthur Buller, and has caused him to forego half-a-dozen pleasant dinner engagements ; and he has plunged Devonport into all the horrors of a contested election, embittered by the blatant presence of Mr. Bousfield Ferrand, and he is therefore *anathema maranatha* with the whole of Brooks's and with a considerable section of the Reform Club.

We do not ourselves approve of Mr. Osborne's conduct. We consider it desirable that a politician should be, as nearly as may be, under the control of the leader of his party ; that he should as seldom as possible feel and never express any opinion distasteful to his chief ; that he should gratefully accept office when it is offered to him, whether he believes himself to be fit for it or not, and that he should speak and vote with equal fidelity and good temper when thrust aside for others whose service claims are inferior to his own. Such is in our view a fair picture of a perfect member of Brooks's, and we sincerely wish Mr. Osborne came up to it. We admit with sorrow that he does not.

But we very much doubt whether it will be either fair or wise in the old Whigs to push matters to extremity with the

ex-member for Liskeard. We doubt whether it will be fair, because he is by no means the first Whig placeman who has shown temper at being excluded from office, or insubordination when in office, and has nevertheless continued to do excellent service to the party. And we doubt whether it will be wise, because even a rat—which Mr. Osborne is not—when driven into a corner becomes a very dangerous animal. When an attempt was once made to exclude Messrs. Gibson and Bright from the House of Commons it appeared at first to be successful; but retribution followed those who had perpetrated it with no halting foot, and Mr. Gibson now sits in the Cabinet by the side of the very men who denounced him as unfit to sit in Parliament. Whatever may be Mr. Osborne's faults, he has always been a consistent Liberal in all things save in blind subservience to Lord Palmerston; he has a ready wit, a fluent tongue, and a bold—some call it a brazen—front. What he has to say he says brilliantly, and the House always listens to him. If he has not behaved well to his party in the present instance, neither has his party behaved well to him; and we humbly beg to express a doubt whether the Whigs are so strong, and whether true and consistent Liberals are so plentiful in the House of Commons, as to be in a position to dispense with the services of such a man as Mr. Bernal Osborne unquestionably is, or to run the chance of converting, by insult and injury, an effective supporter into a still more effective enemy.—*Pall Mall Gazette*, June 19, 1865.

Mr. Bernal Osborne and his Party.

It is a fearful thing for a Liberal member to fall into the hands of an outraged Treasury whip. Disinterested patriotism is a no more availing excuse for political insubordination in the eyes of the whip than a disinterested love of truth was an apology for heresy in the eyes of an inquisitor. We have just missed an imposing *auto-da-fé*. A grand and striking example of the frightful fate which every Liberal heresiarch had to expect was being carefully prepared in the borough of Liskeard. The yellow shirt was ready, and Mr. Brand had kindled the retributive flame. But with signal audacity the

victim has contrived to make his escape. Mr. Bernal Osborne declines to be a hero in the great Palmerstonian Act of Faith. He has fled in a state of hardened impenitence, pouring forth contempt and reviling on the heads of his persecutors. The familiars of that veritable Holy Office, the Treasury, hold up their hands in pious horror, and stop their ears against the ravings of the worst of political blasphemers. A Whig who declines to believe in the impeccability of Lord Palmerston is to other Whigs what an Atheist is to a curate. He is guilty of the greatest and most unpardonable of sins. Such a being should not be suffered to exist. He poisons the Parliamentary atmosphere, and spreads a deadly and vote-destroying heresy among the ranks of the faithful. A Tory knows no better, and may be converted. But in a born and bred Whig, apostasy, or even timid doubts, can only be dealt with by the knife, the cord, or the stake. A Whig member who declines to be 'the blind follower of a particular Minister,' when that Minister is the heaven-born Palmerston, is so clearly and eternally given over to a reprobate mind that mercy would be a sheer mistake. He must be cut off from the congregation, and solemnly cursed with bell, book, and candle.

There is perhaps something a little startling in this introduction of the old inquisitional course of procedure into the hitherto mild tactics of Downing Street. Whips have heretofore been lenient, and left much room for repentance. Political heterodoxy or insubordination is deeply trying, we know. A man who spoke against the Government on so important a question as Mr. Disraeli's Danish motion, and, still worse, did not vote with them in this matter of life and death, has sinned almost beyond forgiveness. Such members are as pricks in the eyes and thorns in the side of Mr. Brand, and vex him in the pleasant land wherein he dwells. Still it is possible to inflict a weightier injury than not voting with a Government. Mr. Osborne might have voted against them. Perverse and disagreeable friends are, on the whole—in politics at all events—to be preferred to downright enemies. The late member for Liskeard is not the pleasantest of supporters, but he would certainly make the unpleasantest of opponents. The jest which he has just perpetrated at the expense of Sir

Arthur Buller is in itself a splendid testimony at once to his ingenuity and his unrivalled coolness. Of course it is very unchristian and very unpatriotic in Mr. Osborne to inflict the turmoil and expense of two elections on Sir Arthur Buller and the constituencies of Devonport and Liskeard. At least so it is maintained by those dreadfully scrupulous and indescribable people who insist on investing even the meanest functions of life with a sacred and lofty moral purpose. The moment Mr. Osborne discovered that his party meant to oust him for his insubordinate conduct, he ought to have resigned himself to his fate with Christian meekness. He should have placed all his interest at the disposal of his intended successor, and perhaps might have found time to say a word for him on the hustings when the day of nomination arrived. Unhappily these delightful principles do not prevail very extensively in English electioneering. If a man is spitefully entreated by his party, he is tempted, in the present fallen condition of our poor human nature, to entreat his party spitefully in return.

To snub a constituency and defy the Treasury are actions from which every pious Whig would anxiously recoil, and some of the small fry no doubt look upon Mr. Osborne with the same sentiment with which the craven ministers of Zeus in the old tragedy looked upon the defiant Prometheus. Well-meaning persons are doubtless already at work to bring about some understanding between the offended divinities of the Cambridge House Olympus and this greatly daring mortal. The Liskeard Prometheus determined to convey to men an example of political virtue and independence. His ears were deaf to the 'crack of the Treasury whip.' Nothing would induce him to be the 'thick and thin adherent of any Government.' He absolutely refused to be a 'devoted follower of Lord Palmerston,' and scorned the ignoble part of 'Treasury dependent or provincial delegate.' The constant votaries of the great Jove of the Treasury, foremost among whom is the great Jove of the Press, protest that this is only a pretence. Like Hudibras they cry, 'Ralpho, thou dost prevaricate.' Political independence is, so they say, only a fine synonym for private spleen. It is wonderful, they hint, how exclusion

from office sharpens a man's insight into the defects of official policy. He can then only see the copper side of the shield which, if he had been on the Downing Street side, he would have sworn was all of fine gold. These easy and courteous insinuations are very effective in their own way. People are so ready to believe that all criticism of favourite statesmen or authors or preachers must necessarily spring from some sinister motive, that to ascribe such motive successfully is the easiest thing in the world. Once deify a politician or a writer, and anybody who presumes to find a flaw in anything that the glorified being does or says is at once overwhelmed beneath charges of envy or corruption or reckless cynicism—it does not matter much which, only the worse the charge the better its chances of success. Why not imitate the moderation and sagacity of one of Sir Robert Peel's 'whips,' who, when a member of the party voted on one occasion as seemed right in his own eyes rather than in those of his usual leader, compassionately explained so incomprehensible a backsliding by hinting that there had been insanity in the family of the man's mother? Why not always attribute any exercise of his own judgment or any obedience to his own conscience in a member of Parliament to temporary mental aberration? There can be no harm in taxing every Liberal who refuses to bow abjectly at the shrine of the great Palmerstonian idol with imbecility. It is rather too bad to insist that all stiffneckedness on this point springs from an overflowing personal spitefulness, or even from something lower and meaner still. The wife of a rural clergyman may be pardoned if she keeps a more than usually watchful eye upon the spoons on the table, and the great-coats and umbrellas in the hall, in the presence of a theologian who doubts whether Moses wrote Deuteronomy, or does not firmly believe in the eternity of future punishment. In theology, we are familiar with this truly logical inference of moral depravity from speculative heterodoxy. But in politics, it has scarcely as yet become usual to suspect every Liberal who does not on all occasions join in the universal hosannahs to Palmerston Optimus Maximus of being a disappointed place-hunter.

A Secretary to the Treasury can perhaps scarcely be

expected to see the usefulness of able independent members. From this point of view they must ever remain the most mortifying and inscrutable of political phenomena. But to the outside observer, the existence of such men in Parliament—provided, of course, they are not so numerous as to lead to a thorough disorganization of party discipline—appears a highly satisfactory and convenient thing. Following their party in the main, they are still capable of acting on an independent judgment of their own when it takes them away from their party. There are very few members of this sort in the present House. It is common to talk of men like Mr. Forster or Mr. Potter as independent members, but such talk involves a plainly erroneous view. As a matter of fact, Mr. Potter and Mr. Forster are as much party men as Sir George Grey. They follow Mr. Bright as faithfully as Sir George Grey follows Lord Palmerston. They belong to a small and an extreme party, but still it is a party, and has a sort of party organization and discipline. They are not like Mr. Horsman or Mr. Lowe, or even Mr. Roebuck—men who ordinarily obey a leader with tolerable fidelity, but at the same time are quite ready to disobey him, and even actually to thwart and oppose him, on an emergency. Mr. Bernal Osborne is scarcely a man of the calibre of any of these three, but still he has a power of piquant, occasionally even trenchant, criticism which is uncommonly telling, and does good service. The House always listens to him, and everybody who ever reads debates at all takes care to read his speeches. Mr. Osborne is not remarkable for timidity or bashfulness, and the bold things which he does not restrain himself from saying are obviously more disagreeable to the Ministry, but more weighty with the public, than if they came from the opposite side of the House. The 'whips' may dislike men of this stamp, and political Puritans may think a joke at the expense of two bodies of British electors frivolous or downright wicked. Although nobody can be violently enthusiastic on his behalf, still people who are neither whips nor Puritans would be sorry to miss Mr. Osborne in the new Parliament. At all events it would be hard to keep him out simply because he has a trick of returning evil for evil.—*Saturday Review*, June 24, 1865.

F.

Mr. Osborne's Speech at Nottingham.

There is something more than politics in this contest. The character and independence of your borough are at stake. Are you content to be ruled over by a set of arrogant purse-proud men. The worst aristocracy that can exist is the aristocracy of wealth. Are you prepared to be dictated to like slaves, and driven to the poll like lambs? If you are, I am not the man for you. If you are prepared to support me as the champion of freedom of election, I am prepared to ask for your vote. It is an easy matter for Mr. Cossham to tell his well-meaning dupes who will vote for him that he is not contented with the present Reform Bill, and that he wishes to go further. Why, what will be the case if you send him to Parliament? Those extreme politicians are always the easiest to be managed by the Government whips. They are always to be counted upon. It is very true they tell you they will vote for extreme measures, but why do they do so? They find out that they hold what are called crotchets, and they do so, because they know they are impossible to be carried, and that they will go into the lobby with some ten or twelve other people; but then on other questions they will vote thick and thin with the Government of the day. This is easy and cheap patriotism, which

Not enriches them,
But makes you poor indeed.

My opinions on the great questions of the day have been well known. I am not speaking now for the first time. My votes are before the public. Some well-intentioned person at one of their packed meetings last night—I have held no packed meetings; I have always met you under the broad canopy of heaven, and have not sought to influence you by telling falsehoods of my party or decrying my opponents—(the sentence was not finished owing to the loud and discordant sounds which prevailed). I have a loud voice and a strong heart and

reliance upon you, and I don't mean to be shouted away or whistled down by the emissaries of that monstrous coalition. You have had something of the reduction of the franchise. What are my opinions upon that? Why, while Lord Amberley was in his perambulator, before Mr. Handel Cossham was being polished as a Bristol diamond, I was voting for questions of reform. And what are my opinions about reform? I have always felt that the Act of 1832 gave more to the middle classes than to working men, and I have always felt that another supplementary Act was necessary, and in order to give a fairer proportion of power and a greater number of votes to the working classes. Let there be no mistake. I am for a well-considered, moderate, and judicious measure of reform. I am not like Mr. Cossham crying for the moon, or probably of opinion that this constituency is a green cheese to be ate by him. Let there be no mistake on this question. If I am sent to the House of Commons, I go there as a true reformer—the people's representative, but not the people's delegate. I have certain opinions of my own which I shall endeavour to carry out irrespective of any Ministry or set of men. I am not a Treasury hack. What is the position of this election at the present moment? Am I not attacked and maligned by the Government papers, who are probably making some signal to their organs of the press, as my opponents on the other side are making to their creature? And those are what are called Liberal notes to the electors. No. I supported Lord Russell long before the spurious philanthropy of Mr. Cossham was heard by you, and I shall do so again if Lord Russell runs straight. But I am not going to commit the same mistake which was committed in 1859, when we might have settled the reform question. And I will not for the sake of particular men ignore measures which are for the public good. I will not, in short, in the words of the poet—

Give up to party what was meant for mankind.

So much, gentlemen, for my opinions on the Reform Bill. But am I satisfied with the reduction of the franchise? I do not hesitate to tell you, I think a Bill for the mere reduction of the franchise is a farce while you have all those little

boroughs which would be more properly represented by nice young men who are unable to address great bodies of the people. These little boroughs are very proper for little men, but not for people with a frame and spirit, who come forward before you, and are not ashamed to declare their political sentiments before the great body of their countrymen. If you send me to Parliament, I shall support Mr. Gladstone's Bill for the redistribution of seats, though I do not think it goes far enough, because it only tries to dispose of forty-nine seats. But that is better than No. 30. I am prepared to take what I can get, and shall support that Bill for the redistribution of seats. But, gentlemen, I should deceive you, and should not conciliate that noisy section of water-drinkers, if I did not declare to you that no reform in Parliament will be effective or satisfactory to me which does not endeavour to deal with those black spots in our constitution—bribery and corruption. When the franchise is not regarded as a right, and as a privilege, but as a perquisite, depend upon it the sun of England will set. I shall not be satisfied until Mr. Gladstone takes up this question in its truest sense, and endeavours to cut out the cancer of corruption. What is the proper treatment of corruption? (Great uproar.) That reminds me very much of the House of Commons, for if they are noisy they are also very rotten. But the House of Commons has never been sincere in its endeavour to do away with bribery. The House of Commons has become, as I have told you, a mere rich man's club. It is chiefly occupied by men who have made their fortunes. They go to the constituencies and buy their way into Parliament. What do they do when they get there? Why have you no retrenchment? Why have you people who on the hustings shout for peace, retrenchment, and reform? when they get into Parliament you hear nothing of reform, retrenchment, or peace. You have these rich men going to boroughs, putting large sums into the hands of lawyers and agents, and never asking what becomes of it. They are willing to act upon the great principle of free trade, of buying you in the cheapest market and selling you in the dearest. What is the consequence? They are so accustomed to a lavish expenditure in their own private affairs, that when they

deal with the public money, they think very little of retrenchment. It is because you are making that a house for rich men that so little retrenchment takes place in the public expenditure of this country. I will tell you shortly what we ought to do against corruption. I support vote by ballot. Not because I think that vote by ballot is a complete antidote against the evil with which we have to deal ; but I am willing to try every experiment I can find out in order to extirpate this plague-spot of bribery. You will never do so until, along with the ballot for the poor man, you also have a pillory for rich corrupters. Until you have a pillory erected in Palace Yard where the rich corrupters can be kept for two days and two nights, on Cossham's beverage, and pelted with rotten eggs ; until you make bribery unfashionable, you will find that bribery will go on as it is—the big fishes breaking through the net, while the little fish are caught and prosecuted. Therefore I will tell you it is all moonshine when they talk of their detestation of bribery. Men come down to boroughs and make fair speeches, and what do they do ? They have a man in the moon who gives paint, sugar, or treacle—I don't know what you call it here—and when they get into Parliament they sell you. Such are not my principles. I stand before you determined to spend no money except what is strictly legal. (A voice : 'You're a Tory.') That lying organ of your town—I speak of the *Midland Express*—has published a libel which I have put into the hands of my solicitor. I am at this minute in correspondence with one of the first law advisers in England, how far an action for libel will stand against them for saying I am a nominee of the Carlton Club, and that my expenses are paid by them. I have no such good luck. The other side have got their expenses paid. The Bristol diamond—these are always set false—is going to be placed in a setting which he did not hope for himself. I stand before you on my own humble merits, and my expenses will have to be defrayed out of my own humble purse. And I trust you will see that they are small. I shall not grudge a small outlay, if it will prove the means of my achieving your independence. And now I am reminded that you have to be addressed by another gentleman. I have answered the aspersions and

calumnies which have been sought to be heaped upon my honourable name. If I had had Lord Osborne for my father, picture to yourselves the cringing sycophancy of Mr. Handel Cossham. There is no worshipper of rank so abject as a recreant demagogue. I have no noble connexions, but my good name is as dear to me as my Lord Amberley's name is to him. I stand before you as an independent candidate of independent means. I have done my share in this fight. It now remains for you to do yours. It is your cause and not mine. I am but the humble exponent of your opinions and of your independence. Remember this, men and women of Nottingham, for the women form a large portion of my party, and many of those I see before me are well-dressed, and I have no doubt their principles are as beautiful as their faces—men and women of Nottingham, upwards of two centuries ago a despotic monarch reared on Standard Hill the flag of despotism against independence. That monarch was supported by the oligarchy, the No. 30 of his day; but they fought a vain contest against the people. Cossham has raised his standard of civil war in this town; Cossham, like Charles I. will not lose his head, but he will lose his election. It depends upon you, the great bulk of the working and middle class, whether I shall succeed. If I do, I go to Parliament as an emblem of your independence. I stand here coalescing with nobody. I am an humble and sincere reformer, and as such I ask you to place me at the head of the poll.—*Nottingham Journal*.

Mr. Bernal Osborne.

Mr. Bernal Osborne expressed, during his recent lively and successful canvass of the noisy electors of Nottingham, a fear which he had more than once expressed previously in the House of Commons itself, that that assembly, though by no means in danger of succumbing to democratic influences, is very much in danger of becoming 'a mere rich man's club.' We are not quite sure that the two dangers are as incompatible as they may at first appear. It is quite certain that Mr. Bernal Osborne, as the favourite of the Clifton party, which we may perhaps not unfairly call the rowdy party, at

Nottingham, gratifies, to some extent, one phase, and far from the finest phase, of democratic feeling. It is still more certain that his election will be in the highest degree welcome to all parties in the House, less for the weight and shrewdness of his opinions, though he is clever enough, than precisely because he is a most agreeable member of a 'rich man's club;' in other words, for the off-hand vivacity of his man-of-the-world criticisms, the sarcasm, and not unfrequently the humour, of his chaff, the readiness of his personal allusions, the complete absence of respect of persons in his cynicism, and the large capacity for mimicry and caricature which runs through his easy and amusing speeches. There is clearly no reason in the nature of things why a House of Commons which represented, if it ever should represent, the most noisy, capricious, and flighty element in a democracy, should not also be a most fascinating 'rich man's club.' What the Nottingham crowds enjoyed so much in Mr. Osborne's speeches was precisely what the House of Commons enjoys so much in them also. The sense of humour and the delight in skilful ridicule are pretty much the same all ranks over; for instance, Mr. Osborne's brilliant joke against Mr. Handel Cossham, that he also, like Sir George Jenkinson and Lord Amberley, had the advantage over himself in having 'a handle to his name' would have found at least as many admirers in the House of Commons as it did on the hustings at Nottingham. In fact, there is just that amount of levity and fastness, that want of *finesse*, that rather coarse fibre in Mr. Osborne's humour, which suits about equally a quick-witted crowd and the House of Commons. Mr. Disraeli's banter is far more suited to the House than to the hustings. There is a close fit about it which a crowd would scarcely perceive or thoroughly enjoy. But Mr. Osborne's jokes are rough and ready, broad enough for any one to catch, and yet cultivated enough for the average educated taste. There was real humour as well as ostentatious moderation in putting Lord Amberley back *only* to his 'perambulator' instead of to his cradle, when Mr. Osborne was recalling his own older claims to the confidence of Liberals; and the personality of the joke, while it delighted the Nottingham Radicals because it made fun of the aristocracy, would

have entertained the House of Commons simply by the ridiculous position into which it projected, or rather retrojected, an aspiring and ambitious politician. And there was still more humour, or rather wit, in his sharp criticism on the choice by the Nottingham Liberals of Lord Amberley and Mr. Handel Cossham:—‘You have done the most foolish thing men can do; you have harnessed a jibbing horse to a runaway.’

But though it is quite conceivable that the same man might be a representative of ultra-democratic prejudice and yet the favourite of a ‘rich man’s club,’ it would not be true to say that Mr. Osborne really represents the former except by accident. He gained much popularity, no doubt, by his readiness to attack the Ministry, his independence of the Whigs, and the freedom of his political personalities. He was felt to be a free lance, and the democratic party always prefer a free lance to a regulation Liberal. But Mr. Osborne’s own convictions, so far as he has anything that can be called convictions, are much more nearly appropriate to a rich man’s club than to a poor man’s club—savour more of opulent ease than of Jacobin anger. The very carelessness of air and manner which makes his speaking so popular, his amusing impertinences, his vivacious impudence, all breathe the atmosphere of political satiety and indifference, not of either democratic grudges or democratic faiths. His personalities have no passion in them and are not moulded by any creed. They are dealt out equally on all sides with the lavish manner of a poco-curante who does not care whom they hit, not with that of a democrat who wishes to hit a privileged class, or of a fanatic who wishes to hit the unbeliever. There is nothing of which the literary value has risen more rapidly of late years than a certain calculated impertinence of style which brings down purely traditional grandeur with a run, and appears to set people free from the restraint of stiff conventional moral postures, without even striking a blow. It is of this style that Mr. Osborne is the greatest master in the House of Commons; and it expresses, we need scarcely say, neither democratic nor middle-class nor aristocratic habits of thought, but rather a disinclination

to be oppressed by any habit of thought ; a disposition to challenge everything or everybody coming with any authority or prestige of manner, and to humiliate those who wear that manner—a state of mind implying the absence of all strong political love, strong political hate, or strong political conviction—a temperament of self-possession and self-assertion usually native to a position of social influence and opulent circumstances, and to a gift of harmless individual vanity. This tone of mind would be naturally reflected in a parliamentary style of loose, random, dashing oratory—in a political creed based upon *laissez faire* or Lord Melbourne's famous 'Can't you leave it alone?'—and in an administrative reputation for consummate indolence. And in Mr. Bernal Osborne's case it has certainly been reflected in all three. . . .

The same easy, flippant, poco-curante nature which loves a successful impertinence as it loves itself, makes of Mr. Osborne but a bad administrator. Perhaps he had not much chance of distinguishing himself as Secretary to the Admiralty, for during a good part of his term of office, we believe, Sir Charles Wood, now Lord Halifax, a very active and business-monopolising First Lord, was his chief in the House of Commons ; but certainly he did *not* distinguish himself, and most people thought that he did not try. The Liberal chiefs, who had been attracted by the ability which his off-hand speeches before he took office had shown, were rather in the position—as some one said of Mr. Perceval when he gained over Mr. Tierney to his Administration—'of the noble lord who bought Punch.' Punch was not a very eligible possession when separated from the miscellaneous street life to which he properly belonged. And so too Mr. Osborne was 'no good' on the Treasury Bench, where he could not—at least till Mr. Layard set the example, it was *thought* he could not—be impertinent to everybody with decency. Mr. Disraeli noticed, on the very first night after the resignation of Lord Palmerston's Ministry in 1858 on the Conspiracy Bill, 'that wild shriek of liberty' to which the emancipated Secretary to the Admiralty gave utterance. And no doubt he did feel the relief. Office is not for Mr. Bernal Osborne. He has few, if

any, grave convictions, no official industry, and no solemn pomp of pretence which sometimes answers as well. Supercilious indifference, as of a comfortable and rather flippant political scepticism, towards all powers and dignities, is his favourite *rôle* in the House of Commons. It is not a high line of politics, but it is at least better than the decorous pretentiousness of some kinds of official imbecility.—*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 10, 1866.

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